VIII

SERMONS

May ON THE /7 1/1

Second Chapter of the 2d Epistle

Jesse TO THE Merces

THESSALONIANS,

CONTAINING

The Description, Rise, Growth, and Fall,

ANTICHRIST.

With divers Cautions and Arguments to establish Christians against the Apostacy of the Church of ROME.

Very necessary for these Times.

By that late Reverend and Learned Divine THOMAS MANTON, D. D.

LONDON

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To the READER 227.

Reader,

Octor Thomas Manton was not lo unknown to London, nor is he for much forgotten, as that his Name or Writings Should need any of my Commendations. But Booksellers expecting fuch an Office, I have great reason to be willing to serve thee, in serving the Memorial of fuch a Friend. What he was I need not tell even strangers, after the Character truly gir pen of him by his Friend and mine in his Funeral Sermon: How found in Judgment against extreams in the Controversies of these Times; a great Lamenter of the scandalous and dividing Mistakes of some Self-conceited Men: How earnestly desirous of the healing of our present Breaches, and not unacquainted with the proper Means and Terms; of which the Author of his Funeral Sermon and I had more than ordinary experience. How hard and successful a Student he was and bow frequent and laborious a Preacher, and how highly and defervedly esteemed; All

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this and more, is commonly here known. The small distaste that some few had of him, I took for part of his Honour, who would not win Reputation with any, by flattering them in their mistakes, or unwarrantable ways. He used not to serve God with that which cost him nothing, nor was of their mind who cannot expect or extol God's Grace, without denying those endeavours of Man to which his necessary Grace exciteth them: He knew that without Christ we could do nothing, and yet that by Christ's strengthening us, we can do all things which God bath made necessary to be done by us. He was not of their mind that thought it Derogatory to the Honour of Christ, to praise his Works in the Souls or Lives of any of his Servants, and that it is the honour of his Grace that his justified Ones are Graceless; and that their Judg should dishonour his own Righteoufness, if he make his Disciples more Righteous personally than Scribes and Pharisees, and will fay to them, Well done good and faithful Servant, Thou halt been faithful over a few things --- enter thou into

the Reader.

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into the joy of thy Lord. He knew how to regard the Righteousness and Intercellion of Christ, with pardon of Sin, and Divine Acceptance, instead of Legal per-Sonal Perfection, without denying either the necessity, or assigned office of our Faith, Repentance, or Evangelical Sincerity, in obeying Him that redeemed and justifieth us : He knew the difference between a Man's being justified from the charge of being [liable to Damnation, as a Christless impenitent unbeliever and ungodly] and being [liable to Damnation for meer Sin as Sin, against the Law of Innocency, which required of us no less than Personal, Perfect, Perpetual Obedience]. He greatly lamented the wrong which the Truth and Church underwent, from those that neither knew such differences, nor had humility enough to suspect their judgments, nor to forbear reviling those that had not as confused and unsound apprehensions and expressions as themselves.

But he hath finished his Course, and is gone before us, and hath left here a dark self-diffracting World, and a Church of such

To the Remore

as Christ will perfect; but alas yet lamentably imperfect, as their Errours, Divisions. Contentions, and Scandals have thefe thirteen hundred Years too publickly declared: Children of the Light we are, while the World is in darkness; but alas, yet how dim and clouded! with thousands it does not so much as convince them of their Ignorance, nor maketh them humbly suspicious of an Erring Judgment: So that through the copulation of Pride and Ignorance, few cry out for loud of Errour as the Erroneous, or of Heresie as the Heretical, or of Schism as the Schismatical: And false conceptions are so common among Men, that I think with almost all Mankind, the number of falle Apprehensions in comparison of the true ones, is far greater than unhumbled Understand ings will eafily believe; and yet while Mankind doth fwarm with Errour, those that least know their own, cry down even the toleration of that which alas we cannot Cure: And if a multitude of Errours must not be tolerated, I know not the Person that must be tolerated : And who then be they that shall be the

the avengers of other Mens mistakes? Christ knew that none are so forward to reproach, and so backward to bear with the Motes in Men's Eyes, as they that have Beams in their own.

Among such, what fort of Men on Earth bath more cried down Errour, Herefie, and Schism, than the Papal Tribe, [Away with them, Exterminate them, Burn them hath long bin their cry, their Laws and Pra-Etice; little thinking how they are polluted with Errour, Herefie, and Schism themselves. The revived attempts of this consuming Fiery Spirit, hath made those that dispose of Doctor Manton's Papers, take these against Popery, as now most seasonable: And their plainness suited to common Capacities, may make them to many, more useful than more Argumentative Disputations. They that would have such, may fee Errours that are unanswerable (I should say, unrefutable, for I find that Men and Women too can answer any thing). I confels my felf not throughly studied in these Prophetical parts of the Scriptures, and therefore

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fore none of the fittest to commend such Wittings, any further than they commend themselves. But I am hasting after this my dear departed Brother to the World of Light, where all Divine Mysteries are unveiled, and Life, and Light, and Love, are perfected; for which, even at the Door, I am (though weak) a Believing, and desiring Expetant.

July 8. 1679.

RICH. BAXTER.

An ADVERTISMENT.

To prevent false Copies, that may be published in Dr. Manson's Name: These are to give Notice, that nothing is to be received as Genuine, but what shall be Attested under the Hands of Dr. Bates, or Mr. Baxter.

SERMON I.

2 Theff. 2. 1, 2.

Now we befeech you (Brethren) by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him: That you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, that the day of Christ is at hand.

HE former Chapter was spent in a Consolation against troubles, this in a caution against Error, or to rectify their Judgments concerning the time of Christs second coming. In these two first Verses; we have the manner of proposal V. 1. the matter proposed V. 2.

1. The manner of proposal is very pathetical, by way of Adjuration or Obtestation.

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2. The matter, an Error had crept in among the *Thessalonians*, concerning the speedy and immediate coming of Christ to Judgment, while they were yet alive; which error the Devil set on foot to subvert their Faith, and expose the whole Christian Doctrine to contempt.

First, The manner or obtestation falleth

first under our consideration, in which two things are mentioned.

1. The coming of Christ.

2. Their gathering together unto him. Obtestations are by those things which have great reverence and respect with us, as most likely to prevail. Now these two things are mentioned,

i. As weighty, 2 Tim. 4. I. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearance

and his Kingdom.

2. This was the Article mistaken and perverted as to one circumstance, the Time; but the thing is taken for granted, as an unquestionable truth, and the support of all their hopes, 2 Thess. 1. 10. When he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe.

3. This was a famous Christian Doctrine, with which the Apostles usually began, in planting Religion in any place, I Thest. 5. 1, 2, 3. But of the times and the seasons ye have no reason that I write unto you, for ye your selves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night, &c.

4. It was of precious account with them, 2 Tim. 4. 8. Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.

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So that the obtestation implyeth both the certainty of their belief, and also their dear account of this Article of Faith; and therefore the sense is, As you do assuredly expect him, and love, and look, and long for this day, that it may go well with you, and Christ appear to your glory, so be not troubled.

1. Doct. That the coming of Christ to the judgment, is a truth well known, firmly believed, and earnestly desired by all true Christians.

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2. Doct. That when Christ shall come, all the Saints shall be gathered together unto him.

1. Doc. That the coming of Christ to the judgment, is a truth well known, firmly believed, and earnestly desired by all the Saints.

I. That it is well known, the Apostle produceth the testimony of Enoch, Jude 14. Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints; David often mentioneth it as a thing delighted in by Believers; therefore in a Poetical, or rather Prophetical strain, he calleth upon the Heavens, Earth, Sea, and Fields, to rejoice; before the Lord, for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the Earth; he shall judge the World with Righteousness, and the people with his truth, Psal. 96. 13. and again, Psal. 98. 10. He calleth upon the Creatures to rejoice; before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the Earth; with

with Righteousness shall be judge the World, and the people with Equity; passages which relate, not only to the Kingdom of the Messiah, as it is exercised now in the World, but also to his final act of judging, till which time they are not fully verifyed: Solomon bindeth the whole duty of man upon him by this consideration, Eccles. 12. 13, 14. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his Commandements, for this is the whole duty of man; for God shall bring every work into Judgment, with every secret thing; whether it be good, or whether it be evil: And the Apostles, when they went abroad to Proselyte the World,

usually began with this point.

2. That this is firmly believed by all true Christians. This must needs be so; because it is the grand inducement to all Piety and Godliness, and none ever disbelieved it, but those, the interest of whose Lusts ingaged them to question it, 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4, 5. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, &c. willingly ignorant; their interest puts them upon it, rather than their Conscience, because this Doctrine filleth them with unquiet thoughts, that they cannot so securely follow their sinful pra-

ctices, till they blot out the fear of it, or banish the thoughts of it out of their hearts; but all that obey the teachings of grace (take it for objective or subjective grace) they firmly believe it, Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13. For the grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodlines, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteoufly, and godly in this present World; looking for that bleffed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. The found belief of it is not fo much encountred with the doubts of the mind, as the inclinations of their perverse hearts. Now the seeming reasons of partial men are not to be heard, especially as delivered in a scoffing, malicious way; and on the other fide, Godlines and Mortification standeth upon such evident reafon, as mans unquestionable duty, that it needeth not to be maintained by a lie and manifest falshood: Certainly, they that deny it do not so much reason against this Article of our Christian Faith, as scoff at it; and it is to be imputed to the malignity of their tempers, rather than the acuteness or sharpness of their reason, that they do not believe it. Many things which they urge are a manifest to-ken of the contrary. As the calamities of the good, 2 Thess. 1. 4, 5. So that we glory in you for your Faith and Patience in all your Perseentions and tribulations, that you endure, which

is a manifest token of the righteous Judgment of God; The perversion of Justice, Eccles. 3. 16, 17. And moreover, I saw under the Sun, the place of Judgment, that wickedness was there, and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there; I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous, and the wicked; for there is a time there, for every purpose, and for every work; Things must be reviewed and judged over again; A State Engine to serve Order and Government: doth the benefit of mankind need a lie to promote it? Doth carnal interest govern the World, or Vertue? If meer carnal Interest, what a confusion would there be of all things? Then men might commit all Villany, take away mens lives and goods, when it is their interest, or they could do it safely and fecretly, without infringement of their interest; Servants poison their Masters, if they could do it without discovery, and there were no fin in it; men prey upon others, if it be in the power of their hands; and catch he that catch can, without impunity, would be the truest Wisdom. Clear it is, Vertue cannot be supported, without the thoughts of a World to come; and it is unreasonable to imagine, that God would make a World, which cannot be governed without fallhood and deceit.

3. That it is earnestly desired by all true Christians, that is of chief respect here; for the

the Apostle conjureth them by all that is dear and facred in their most holy Faith; and upon this I will mainly spend the first part of this Discourse. I shall prove it by these two choice pieces of Scripture, which describe the Communion of the Church with Christ, or the dispensations of Christ to the Church; the one concerneth Gods internal, the other his external Government; the Canticles and Revelations. The Book of Canticles is ended with this defire, vote and wish, Cant. 8. 14. Make baste my beloved, and be like a young Hart or Roe upon the Mountains of Spices; the Brides last and great suit to the Bridegroom is, make baste, as to his coming in Glory to judge the World; not that Christ is slack, but the Churches affections are strong; they that go a Whoring after the World, neither defire his coming, nor love his appearing; but the Spoule would have all things haftened, that he might return; he cannot come foon enough to fet the World to rights, and compleat their Happines; it is that only that will perfect their Consolation, and therefore would have the bleffed and longed for meeting haftened. In the other Book of the Revelations, see how it is closed, Rev. 22. 20. Christ saith, Surely I come quickly; and the Church like a quick Echo, faith Even so, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly; it taketh the word out of Christs Mouth, and presently improve th the Promise into a Prayer, and so Christs Voice, and the Churches Voice, are Unisons; the Acclamation of the Saints answereth to his Proclamation; Christ saith, I come, as desiring to meet with us; the Church answereth, even so, come, as desiring his Fellowship and Company: when once Faith apprehendeth the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus to Judgment, Love presently desireth it, as the most comfortable thing, which we can ask of him; that is the farewel suit of the Church to Christ; if he will grant this, all complaints, and sorrow, and sighing, will be no more.

Now I shall give you Reasons, why this is

defired by all true Christians.

1. In respect of him, who is to come. His Person, that we may see him, who is our great Lord and Saviour; all that believed any thing of Christ, defired to see him; those that lived before his coming in the flesh, John 8.56. Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad; and the same affection possesseth us that live after his coming in the flesh; we know him by hear-say, we have heard much of him, he wooeth us by a Proxy, as Eliezer Abrahams Servant did Rebekah. Now Christians would fain see him, of whom they have heard, and whom they loved, and in whom they have believed, I Pet. 1. 8. Whom having not seen, ye love, and in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; they do not see Christ, but they have a taste of his goodness, I Pet. 2. 3. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious; They have felt his comforts, and live by his Life; all that is wanting, is but ocular Vision, that they may see him Face to Face; therefore they long for

his coming.

2. The Excellency of Christ their head, shall then be fully revealed, therefore it is comfortable to his Saints to think of his second comeing; it is called, the Revelation of Christ, I Pet. 1. 13. Christ is now under a Vail, retired within the Curtain of the Heavens; the wicked often ask, where is now your God? and our own unbelieving hearts are apt to question the glory of his Person, and the truth of his Promises, when his most faithful Servants are under disgrace: Christ is a glorious King, but little of his Glory is seen in the World; therefore they desire that he may appear in Glory, and Royalty; we pray that his Kingdom may come.

2. The persons desiring, there is somewhat

in them to move them to it.

1. The Spirit of Christ, Rev. 22. 17. The Spirit in the Bride, saith come; the Holy Ghost breadeth this desire in the Church; nature saith, it is good to be here; but this is a disposition above nature; the Flesh saith, Depart, but the Spirit saith, Come; the great work

of the Spirit is to bring us and Christ together, he cometh from the Father and the Son. to bring us to the Father by the Son; his bufiness is to marry us to Christ, the promise being past, the Spouse longeth to see her beloved. It is the Spirit kindleth a defire in us of his fecond coming, when the Marriage that is now contracted, shall be consummated; when the Queen shall be brought unto the King in rayment of Needle-work, and shall enter into the Palace with him; there to abide for ever. Well then, though guilty Sinners would have Christ stay away still, and if it might go by Voices, the Carnal World would never give their Voice this way, Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly; no, they are of the Devils mind, Why art thou come to torment us before the time? Mat. 8. 29. Thieves and Malefactors, if they might have the liberty to choose, they would never look, nor long for the day of Affizes; but the Spirit in the Bride is another thing, it giveth us other inclinations; the fooner Christ cometh, the better; they can never be soon enough taken up to him, nor he come to them.

2. There are Graces planted in us, Faith, Hope, and Love, to move us earnestly to de-

fire his coming.

1. Faith believeth Christ will be as good as his word; I will come again, if it were not so, I would have told you, John 14.2. And if Christ saith

faith in a way of Promise, I come, the Church saith, Amen, in a way of Faith, even so, Come. If Christ had gone away in discontent, and with a threat in his mouth, Ye shall never see my face more, we should altogether despair of seeing him again; but he parted in Love, and left a Promise with us, which upholdeth the Hearts of Believers during his absence. Would Christ deceive us, and flatter us into a Fools Paradise? What need that? He can strike us dead in an instant, if we do not please him, and we have hitherto found him true in all things, and will he fail us at last?

2. Hope, which is Faiths Handmaid, it looketh for that which we do believe, it is the immediate effect of the new Creature, 1 Pet. 1.3. Begotten to a lively hope; as foon as Grace is infused, it discovereth it self by its tendency to its end, and rest; it came from Heaven, and

carrieth the Soul thither.

3. Love is an affection of Union, it desireth to be with the party loved, Phil. 1.23. I desire to depart, and to be with Christ; therefore its Voice is, Come, Come, he hath Communion with us in our Houses of Clay; therefore we desire presence with him in his Palace of Glory; his Voice now is very sweet, when he saith, Come unto me ye that are weary and heavy laden, but much more will it be so, when he saith, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit a Kingdom prepared for you, before the foundations of the World

World were laid: Reconciliation with God is comfortable, but what will fruition be!

3. Look upon a Christians Priviledges. Believers then find the fruit of their interest in him, and have their reward adjudged to them, Rev. 22. 12. Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me. Christ doth not come empty handed; it is but maintenance we have from him now, but then Wages; earnest now, but then the full sum; It is our Pay-day, yearather it is our Crowning day, 2 Tim. 4. 8. Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which God the righteous Judge will give me in that day: I Pet.5.4. When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a Crown of glory, which fadeth not away; those that have been faithful and diligent in their duty, shall not need to feek another Pay-Master; that which Christ giveth us in hand, is worth all the pains that we lay out in his Service; Grace and inward Peace: but then we shall have Glory and Honour; he will honour us in the fight of those that have opposed, contradicted, and despised us: Our comfort is hidden, but our Glory is fenfible, and visible, and publick before all the World.

Objection. But how can true Christians earnestly desire it, when so many tremble at the thought of it for want of assurance of Gods Love?

Ans. We suppose a Christian in a right frame, and

and one that doth prepare for his coming:

r. The meanest Saint hath some inclination this way; it was one of the points of the Apostolical Catechism, Heb. 6. 2. The Doctrine of Resurrection from the dead, and of eternal Judgment: and the Apostolical Catechism was for the initiating, or entring of Christians into the Faith and Profession of the Gospel, when they laid the foundation; this was one truth, which was never omitted, the coming of Christ to Judgment; now Faith is a believing, not with the mind only, but the heart; they were to be affected with what they did believe, Sapida scientia, was the qualification, and not with trembling only, for that would deter them from Christianity; but with rejoicing of hope, which did invite them to the practice of it, Heb. 3. 6. Whose house are me if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm unto the end; and indeed what other affection can become the thought of Christs rewards which he will bring with him?

2. Sometimes there may be a drowlines, and indisposition in the Children of God, when their Lamps are not kept burning; Luke 12. 37. Blessed are those Servants, whom when the Lord cometh, he shall find watching; but the wise Virgins slumbered as well as the foolish; and so for a Season they may be unprepared for his coming, by carelessness, or remission of

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their watchfulnes, and neglect of preparation, yet the Spirit and inclination this way beginneth with the new birth: A Wife desireth her Husbands coming home after a long Journey, but it may be all things are not ready, and in so good order: Sometimes all good Christians desire the coming of Christ, but sometimes they are not so exact and accurate in their walkings, and therefore their affections are not so lively; security breedeth deadness, and God is fain to rouze us up by sharp afflictions.

3. The Church doth really and heartily defire Christs coming, though they tremble at some circumstances of his coming: there is a degree of bondage, that hindereth much of our confidence and boldness, 1 John 2. 17,18. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may bave boldness in the day of Judgment; because as he is, so are we in this World. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment; he that feareth is not made perfect in love; while we are imperfect, there may be some fears, how it shall go with us in the Judgment. The day of Judgment may be considered in effe rei, or in effe cognito, the success of the day it self, that we may stand before Christ in the Judgment, or in our apprehension of it, that we may think of it with boldness, confidence, and defire; all fincere persons shall speed well in the Judgment; but while we

are thus weak, and imperfect, we have little confidence of our fincerity. Certainly, the more holy we are, the more we are emboldened against Judgment to come; therefore we must every day get a Conscience soundly established against the sears of Hell and Damnation.

4. To be of such a temper as not at all to value, and prize, and delight in it, quencheth all sense of Godliness and Religion; surely they are not touched with any sear of God, who wish it would never come, who would be glad in their heart to hear such news; they have the Spirit of the Devil in them, who count his coming their burden and torment; they cannot say the Lords Prayer without a fear to be heard; and pray thy Kingdom come, when they desire it may never be; the thoughts of it casts a damp on their carnal rejoicing, and he that is asraid, lest his Prayers prove true, can never pray heartily; no

not with a moral fincerity.

Use. To press us to keep up a firm belief, and an earnest desire of Christs coming; this will make you Heavenly minded, Phil. 3. 20, 21.

For our Conversation is in Heaven, where we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. It will ingage you to Fidelity in your duty; for every one of us must give an account of himself to God, John 2. 28. And now, little Children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we

may have confidence, and not be ashamed before bim at his coming. To watchfulness as well as faithfulnes, Luke 21. 36. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. Yea to diligence, that you may clear up your title and interest, Heb. 9. 28. And to them that look for him shall be appear the second time, without sin unto salvation: 2 Pet. 3, 12. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. Oh therefore let this be a precious truth to you, which you would not forgo for all the World; if others tremble at the mention of it, still carry it so that it may be your comfort and solace. In short, believe it strongly, think of it frequently, prepare for it diligently, improve it fruitfully to all holy Conversation and Godliness, yea to get Oyl, not into your Lamps only, but Veffels, Grace in your hearts, as well as profess your selves to be Christians.

II. Doc. That when Christ shall come, all the Saints shall be gathered together unto him.

For evidencing this, let me clear to you, that at the day of Judgment there shall be,

1. A Congregation.

2. A Segregation.

3. An Aggregation.

They are all intended, but principally the

1. A Congregation; Mat. 25.32. Before him shall be gathered all Nations; And not only all Nations, but all Persons, 2 Cor. 5. 10. We must all (collective) appear before the Judgment-feat of Christ, that every one (distributive) may receive according to the things done in his body or. All that have lived from the beginning of the World unto that day, shall without exception of any one single person; from the least unto the greatest, appear before the Tribunal of Christ; no Age, no Sex, or Nation; or Dignity, or Greatness, can excuse us. In the World some are too high to be questioned, others too low to be taken notice of, but there all are brought forth to undergo their Tryal; there is no shifting or avoiding this day of appearance; Adam will there meet with all his Posterity at once. Take all the distinctions of Mankind, Infants, and grown Persons; I mean Infants who die before they are in an ordinary way capable of the Doctrine of Life (the Scriptures are written for grown persons, the Case of Infants is more obscure,) those of them who are born within the Church, God is their God; Gen. 17. 7. I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee. Good and bad is the next diftin-

distinction, both forts come to receive their Sentence; only the one come to the Judgment of Condemnation, the other to the Judgment of Absolution, John 5. 28, 29. These that have done good, to the refurrection of life, and those that have done evil, to the resurrection of Condemnation; Acts 24. 15. There shall be a resurrection of the dead; both of the just and unjust. The next distinction is men of all Callings, Apoltles, Ministers, private Christians; Apostles, Paul expected to be judged, I Cor. 4. 4. I know nothing of my felf, yet am I not thereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord; he speaketh with respect to the execution of the Apoltolical Office: Ordinary Ministers, Heb. 13. 17. They watch for your souls, as those that must give an account: If Souls miscarry through their negligence, they are anfwerable to God for it: Ordinary Christians, Rom. 14. 12. Every one must give an account of himself to God. Men of all conditions, poor or rich, weak or powerful, high and low, Rev. 20. 12. I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; I mean those that are so distinguilhed now; these distinctions do not outlive time, there all stand on the same level; the rufling men of the World shall then be afraid, and call upon the Mountains to cover them from the wrath of him that sitteth upon the Throne, Rev. 6. 16. The poor are not forgotten, they are Gods Creatures, and must undergo

dergo his Judgment. Thus shall all people that live scattered up and down in the World, how much soever they differ from one another in Rites, Tongues, Customs of living, be

brought together in one place.

2. There is a Segregation: Mat. 25. 32, 33. He shall separate the one from the other, as a Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats; and he shall set the Sheep on his right hand, and the Goats on his left. There may be now a confulion and mixture of the godly and the wicked, as Sheep and Goats' feed in the fame pafture, and they may be all raifed together according to the places where they lived and died; but then a perfect separation: good and bad are first gathered together, but the good are drawn into a Company by themselves, but no pure Company, till the great Shepherd will judge between Cattle and Cattle, Ezek. 34.17. He will gather his Saints together, Plat. 50. 5. Plat. 1. 3. The ungodly shall not stand in the Judgment, nor Sinners in the Congregation of the righteous. So Mat. 13. 44. At the end of the World the Angels shall come, and sever the wicked from among the just.

3. An Aggregation; Believers are gathered

together to him for feveral ends.

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ngo 1. To make up the number of Christs Train and Attendants, to wait on him, Jude 14. in ungadow arias, with his hill ten thousands; Zech. 14. 3. And the Lord my God shall come,

and all the Saints with him; I Thes. 4.17. The dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are alive shall be caught up together in the Clouds with

them, to meet the Lord in the air.

2. That after Judgment we may be folemnly presented to God, by head and Poll, we were given to Christ to be preserved unto the Glory we were designed for; John 17. 6. I have manifested thy name unto the men, which thou gavest me out of the World, thine they were, and thou gavest them me; not by way of Alienation, but Oppignoration, recompence, and charge, Christ is to give an account, John 6. 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. The Form of Presentation is, Heb. 2. 13. Behold I, and the Children which God hath given me.

3. That in one Troop we may be brought into his Heavenly Kingdom; John 14.3. And if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to my lelf; that where I am, there ye may be also; The whole Flock shall then follow the great Shepherd of the

Sheep, into the Everlasting Fold.

Use 1. Believe this gathering together to him; we are joined to the Church of Gods Elect, now by Faith only, Heb. 12.22, 23. Ye are come to the general Assembly, and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, &c.

Pan-

Pariyuess, is a meeting made up of many different Persons, gathered together from several Countries into one body, and one place, as the meeting of all forts of persons, from all the Corners of Greece, to see the Olympick Games, was called the Parryuers, People of all Countries came to behold their ayaves; so the mystical state of the Church of the Gospel, is a general Assembly, because it is not confined to one Nation, but extended to Believers of all Nations, and Ages, they are drawn into a Body, or Heavenly Society, into one Fold, under one Shepherd; but they never meet in an actual Affembly, until the last day, which is the great Congregation, or Rendezvouz of the Saints, so that now it is matter of Faith.

2. See you be of the number, when some are admitted others are thrust out; Luke 13.

28. There shall be meeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and ye your selves thrust out; The wicked shall not stand in this Congregation. Oh it is a blessed and a comfortable thing, when we are made Members of the mystical body of Christ, and have hopes, that we shall be in the number of those that shall meet together in the great Assembly, and Congregation of the righteous; that we are trained up in the Church of Christ, which is the Seminary of

Heaven, that we are no more Strangers, and Foreigners, but fellow Citizens with the Saints.

3. Let us improve it many ways.

1. To comfort us against the paucity of serious walkers, and real Christians: Alas! now they are but like two or three Berryes upon the top of the uppermost bough; here one, and there another; in some places thinner, in others thicker, as God hath service for them 3 in appearance pineor woiperior, A little Flock, Luc. 12. 32. But take all together, they are a general Assembly, that are redeemed out of every Kindred, Tongue, and Nation, Rev. 5. 9. Yea, Rev. 7. 9. A great multitude, which none can number, of all Kindreds, Tongues, People, and Nations; As few as we are, and as despiled as the interest of the godly is, we shall not want Company in Heaven, we fee few going to Heaven, but when we are gathered together, we shall see that our everlasting Compamions are many.

2. To comfort us against the distance of Christian Friends, we are often separated from the Society of good Christians, whom we love dearly, but we shall be gathered together in one Congregation; The Saints are now scattered by Providence; they live in divers Countries, Towns, Houses, have little comfort of one another; They live where they may be most useful; as Stars do not shine

in a Cluster, but are dispersed throughout the Heaven; and as they are the light of the Earth, so they are the Salt of the Earth, which is forinkled here and there, not laid in a heap: fometimes by violence of men, perfecution, and banishment; sometimes by Death, which parts Friends, Perfectus est quem putas mortuum, like people in a wrack, got to shore before us. Now what a comfort is it to be united to all Gods people, which have been, are, or shall be, to the end of the World; and to meet in one Assembly, Mat. 24. 31. They shall gather together the elect from the four winds; from one end of Heaven to another; The Saints shall be gathered from all quarters of the Earth; though they live in feveral places, feveral times, many we never faw in the flesh, Christ will assemble them all bring them in unto one place.

3. To comfort them under the degenerate and collapsed state of Christianity, (1.) The mixture of the wicked; the good and bad are here mixed, they live together in the same Kingdoms, Cities, Societies, Visible Church, Family, Bed, (perhaps) but then a perfect separation, Zach. 14. Last, There shall no more be the Canaanite in the House of the Lord of Hosts; Rev. 21. 27. Nothing that desileth shall enter there: such a difference shall there be between the State of Gods Church in this World, and the World to come: here Tares are mingled with Wheat, good Fish with bad in the Drag C 4

Net, it is hard by Discipline to keep the sound from the infected. (2.) Discord; the Saints are divided in Affection, but then perfect Harmony; they are all gathered together to Christ, and have no signs and badges of distinction, to herd apart. (3.) It's Universal, with all the Saints. (4.) Perpetual, never to part more.

SER-

SERMON II.

2 Theff. 2. 1, 2.

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

E come now to the matter of the Apostles Caution, which is in the second Verse, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. In which words take notice,

1. Of the error disproved, that the day of

Christ is at band.

2. The effect which this error might produce; trouble and unsetledness of mind, That ye be not soon shaken in mind or troubled.

3. A removal of all the supposed Foundations of this error, or the means which these Impostours used to intice them to embrace it; Three are mentioned, Spirit, Word, and Letter.

1. Nor by Spirit, that is, pretence of spiritual Revelation, be not soon shaken in mind by it.

2. Nor

2. Nor by word, some word of the Apostle, which they pretended to have heard, and that is another slight of deceivers; some tradition or doctrine delivered by the Apostle by word of mouth.

3. Nor by Letter as from us: this may be understood, (1.) Either of some passage in the former Epiftle, for the Apostle faith there, I Theff. 4. 17. Then me which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and because he joins himself with them, they thought he should survive until that day, or else these warnings which the Apostle gives them, I Thesi. 5. 1, 2, 3. Of the times and feafons I need not write unto them, for your selves know perfectly that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night, &c. Now these warnings they might abuse, and this is one way by which men may be unsetled and unshaken; i.e. by false gloffes and interpretations of Scripture. (2.) Or rather the sence may be, some spurious and counterfeit writings, which was one means of deceit used in the Primitive Times; supposititious or Apocryphal Legends, wherein the Apoftle might be faid to write something, as if Christ should come in that Age wherein they lived. Now to obviate this, the Apolle is Supposed to insert that passage, Chap.3. 17. The Salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every Epistle: So I write. First,

First, From the Error disproved, observe, Doc. That the time of Christs coming to Judgment must be patiently expected, not rashly defined, or determined; for this is the Error, which the Apostle with such earnest-

ness opposeth here.

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But you will fay, is this such an error? Do not the holy Apostles themselves say, in effect, the same, as the Apostle James, Chap. 5.8. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh; and the Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. 4. 7. The end of all things is at hand: Yea Paul himself, 1 Cor. 10. 11. These are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the World are come; and Rom. 13. 12. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand; where by night is meant the state of Ignorance, Sin, and Paganism before Conversion, and by the day is meant the state of our full Regeneration and Illumination in eternal Glory; when the corrupt World shall come to an end, and all shadows shall fly away. As if he had faid, the Morning of the Refurrection is at hand, the night is far spent, not quite past, and the day is at hand; the night is not throughly gone, nor the day wholly come, yet he faith, it is at hand. What evil was in this Opinion, that the Apostle should with such vehemency argue and reason against it? Ans. There is some difference in the words, for Tyliner, fignifies it draweth near, everymen, it is begun already. But the sense is vastly different;

for by these and such like expressions, the Apostle only did intend that the last dispensation was then on foot, no other change of dispensation or worship was to be expected, till the Coming of Christ. But I shall more clearly, and distinctly shew,

1. What reason the Apostle had to speak

at this rate.

2. What little reason these Seducers had to pervert this Speech to countenance their Hypothesis or supposition.

1. For the first, the Apostle had reason to

fay the day of the Lord was at hand.

1. With respect of Faith; for Faith gives a kind of presence to things, Heb. 11.1. Now Faith is the Substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen: That is, it gives a being, a kind of existence to things future, and afar off, and fets them before the eyes of our mind, and gives us some fight of them, as if they were already come. And therein it agrees with the light of Prophecy; look as by the light of Prophecy, John faith, Rev. 20. 12. I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the Books were opened, &c. fo Faith doth in effect fee what it believes. Well then, Faith looking upon things distant and absent, as near at hand, the Apostle had reason to use this language to Believers, as if the Judge were at the door. Phil. 4. 5. Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord

is at hand, not only in regard of his present Providence, but also with respect to his second coming to Judgment; it is as certain to

Faith, as if he were already come.

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2. With respect of Love, Love will not account it long to endure the hardthips of this present World, until Christ come to set all things at rights: Facob served seven years for Rachel, for the love he bare to her, and it feemed to him but a little while; Gen. 20. 20. If we had any love for Christ, we should be contented to fuffer a while for his fake; The time is coming, when the wicked shall persecute no more; when the mouth of iniquity shall be stopped, when the defire and hope of all Believers shall be satisfied, when the Redeemers work shall be consummated, when the Kingdom shall be delivered up to the Father, when those that made a jest of this day, shall be fully confuted; Faith fees the certainty of it, and love makes us hold out till the time come about.

3. The Apostle might speak so, as comparing time with Eternity, Psal 90. 4. A thou-sand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past, and as a Watch in the night. 2 Pet. 3.8. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The longest time to Eternity is but as a drop lost and spilt in the Ocean; and all the tediousness of the present life, is but like one rainy day to an Everlasting Sun-shine, 2 Cor. 4.17. Our light

light affliction which is but for a moment, workerth for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory; though troubles are lengthened as long as our lives are, yet they are but a moment in respect of Eternity: we reckon by time, and not by Eternity; and therefore these expressions may seem strange to us.

4. The Apostle speaks this to particular

men, whose abode in the World is not very long; Eternity and the Judgment is at hand, though Christ tarry long till the Church be compleated, and the Elect be gathered. 2 Pet. 3. 9. The Lord is not flack concerning his Pro-mife, as some men count flackness. Now what is long, and what is afar off to the whole Church, confidered in feveral fuccessions of Ages; it is short to particular persons. Death foon puts an end to their conflict, and then their Triumph enfues; And to Christ is ready to judge at all times, though the World be not ready to be judged. The Coming of Christ is uncertain, and hidden for this very purpose, that men in all Ages might be quickened to faithfulness and watchfulness, and make that preparation which is necessary. Now therefore it concerns the Messengers of God, to bind mens duty upon them, by showing the nearness of it in all the forementioned considerations, that they might be always ready; for fo we find our Lord himself pretting it, Luke 12. 40. Be ye therefore ready, for the Son cometh

Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord cometh: He may come in a moment, our duty is unquestionable, but the time of his coming is uncertain; And to please our selves with the thoughts of a delay, is a mighty deadening thing, and quencheth our duty; yea, it is an inticement to all evil, Mat. 24, 48. The wicked Servant took liberty to beat his sellow Servants, because of his Lords delay; we are bid to be sober and watchful, and always to be looking for the coming of the Lord.

2. The Seducers had little reason to pervert this Speech to the countenance of their Hypothesis, or supposition, and therefore the Apostle had very good reason to be zealous in the consutation of this Hypothesis of the Seducers, who maintained that Christ would

come in that Age.

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1. To inquire after the time, is cariolity: Acts 1. 7. It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father bath put into his own power. Those things which God hath referved to himself, for us to inquire after, is sinful: It is a great evil to pry into our Masters Secrets, when we have so many revealed truths to busy our minds about; we take it to be a piece of ill manners, to pry into that which is purposely concealed; as to break up a secret Letter, and the like: the practising of known duties,

duties, would prevent this curiofity; these things tend not to our profit and edification.

2. Much more was it a fin to fix the time, it was an arrogant prefumption; for of that day and hour, knoweth no man, no not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only, Mat. 24.36. The peremptory time of the day of Judgment God keeps to himself, and it is arrogance for any to define it, and set a time, when God is reloved to keep it secret.

3. The fixing of that time did a great deal

of hurt.

1. For the present it drew away their minds from their calling, because they expected a sudden coming of the Lord; Ill impressions either destroy or weaken necessary duties.

The least Error doth gratifie Sathan, and the interest of his Kingdom, for he is the Fa-

ther of Lies.

3. It might shake their Faith in other things, when their credulity was disproved by the event; the Gospel might be brought into contempt, when their Error only was consuted; as many men who have been peremptory in fixing times, afterwards, have thrown off their Religion.

4. It shewed a diseased mind, that they were sick of Questions, as the Apostle speaks, 1 Tim. 6.4. Doting about questions and strifes of

words,

words, whereof cometh envy, &c. when they had so much wholsome food to feed upon.

5. It did but ingender strife among Christians, begat wranglings and disputes in the Church, I Tim. 6. 4. He is proud knowing nothing, but doting [or fick] about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, rail-

ing, evil surmisings.

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Of i. Let us not fix times: many of the Antients were too bold this way, and we are apt to it. Last antius peremptorily said, The World would endure but two hundred years after his time: So, many will fix the time of the calling the Jews, and of the destruction of Anti-Christ, without evident grounds and reafons. What God hath revealed is enough to bear us out in our duty and suffering: in other things let us patiently wait; we see reafon to do so, when we consider how many men have proved false Prophets.

2. Let us not put off the time, and set it at too great a distance; distant things, though never so great, will hardly move us; that which men put off they do in effect put away; they put sar off the evil day, they would not let it come near their minds, to have any operation upon them. Look as the Stars, those vast Globes of Light, by reason of the distance between us and them, do seem but as so many spangles: so we have but a weak sight of what is set at a great distance, and their ope-

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ration on us will be but small; the closer things are, the more they will work upon us; one that looks upon what God hath revealed of this as sure, and near, is more affected with it than others are: therefore set your selves at the entrance of that World, where you must everlastingly be, and watch, and be ready: they that put it off, are apt to loyter in their work. If Christs coming be not near at hand, certainly the time of our departure is at hand, and it will not be long e're it come about. But this is but Introductive to the Doctrine of Anti-Christ: Therefore I come to the second thing.

Secondly, The effect that this error might produce, trouble and unsetledness of mind; that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or troubled. In the words there is a two-fold Metaphor; the one taken from a Tempest, or Sea storm, as the word plainly implies, that ye be not shaken in mind; and the other word is taken from the sudden alarm of a Land

Fight, which breeds trouble.

1. Doct. That Errors breed trouble of mind: they do not only trouble the Churches Peace, Gal. 5. 12. I would they were even out off which trouble you; but they hinder tranquillity of mind, Gal. 1. 7. There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.

How do Errors hinder tranquillity of mind?

mind? Partly because it is an unsound foundation, it can never yield folid peace; we only find rest for the Soul in a true Religion. and there where it is purely professed: Others are left to great doubts and uncertainties. The Lord feems to direct us in this course, when we are upon confultation about the taking up of a Religion, Jer. 6. 16. Stand in the ways. and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Soul-rest is only found in Gods way, and where it is most clearly professed. Partly, because whatever false Peace is bred there, it will at last end in trouble. The Apostle compares Seducers, Jude 13. to raging waves of the Sea, foaming out their own shame; and we are told of the Locusts that came out of the Bottomlesspit, Rev. 9. 5. That they stung like Scorpions. Every erroneous way of Religion is comfortless; yea, their Doctrine breeds anxiety, and vexes the Spirit; for they have no true way of quieting the Conscience; Let us therefore detest Error, because it is so much our interest. It is the property of truth to beget a delectation of mind, it is sweeter than honey, and the honey comb. Verum est bonum intellectus. Truth is the good of the understanding; now when we understand truth satisfyingly, it breeds an incredible delight; when we have been in some perplexities, and begin to find out a truth, Prov. 24.

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13, 14. My Son, eat thou boney, because it is good, and the honey comb, which is sweet unto thy tast: So shall the knowledge of wisdom be, when thou hast found it. Honey is not so sweet to thy tast, as this is to thy understanding. When a man hath found out any truth though it be but a natural truth, it breeds its oblectation; much more spiritual truth, it is very pleasing to the understanding, and most of all when spiritual. Truth is obeyed and practifed, for the understanding gives us but a fight of it, but obedience gives a tast thereof. Our Saviour faith, Mat. 11. 28, 29, 30. Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. If you will but come under Christs blessed Yoke and Scepter, and that way of Religion he hath recommended to you, you will find an incredible Peace, Joy, and oblectation in your mind.

2. Doc. That Christians should be so established, and have such constancy of mind, that they should not be easily shaken and mo-

ved from the Faith.

1. Let us see how this is pressed. Sometimes it is pressed from the encouragement of your great hope, 1 Cor. 15. 58. Be stedfast, and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as you know, that your labour

is not in vain in the Lord. First, He would have them stedfast and unmoveable; these two words have their special signification, the one is a degree above the other; a man may be stedfast in a thing, though he be moved a little in some by-matters; but now, since your Innocency will bear you out, be not only stedfast, but immoveable, which is a higher degree; but take it thus, Be stedfast in your felves, and unmoveable by the storms of Temptation from without: a man is stedfast in himfelf, setled upon his own foundation; and you are unmoved, when you are strengthned against outward assaults: Acts 20. 24. None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so I might finish my course with joy. A Man may be settled in the knowledge of the truth, but he is not unmoveable, except he be fortified against all Temptations, that may draw him off from his profession: Such constancy of mind may be well inforced, because of our great hope; thus it is pleaded for there. Then the absolute necessity of it is urged at other times, as Col. 1. 23. If ye continue in the Faith grounded and setled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel: the same condition is required to continue, as to begin our right in the priviledges of the Gofpel; there are some conditions required for the beginning, others for the continuing of our right; now this is absolutely required for

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the continuing of our right, both for present reconciliation with God, and future Glory; it is upon this condition, if ye continue in the Faith.

2. Let us inquire what is necessary to this constancy and establishment of mind, that we may not be soon troubled and staken; partly, that our minds may be inlightened to know the truth, and our hearts renewed to believe and love the truth; for without this there can never be any constancy of mind in

Religion.

1. A clear Conviction of the Truth, or certainty of Knowledge, a rooted affent, or well grounded perswasion, not some fluctuating opinion about it : an half light maketh us very uncertain in our course, James 1.8. A double-minded man is unstable in all his wayes; Situz @ axalasaile; First, try all things, I Thesi. 5. 20. then, bold fast that which is good. When men resolve upon Evidence, or after due Examination, the truth sticketh the closer and faster by them; but when they take up things, hand over head, they have no firm Principles, and therefore waver hither and thither; as Vessels without Ballast are tossed with every wave, 2 Pet.3. 16,17. Beneare left ye also being led away with the errour of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness; idion sherywon, Substantial grounds within themselves; they do not stand by the knowledge of others, or

the Faith of others, and consent of others: light chaff is carried about with every wind, recognized. Eph. 4. 14. That ye benceforth be no more Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Dostrine; they go through all parts of the compas; sometimes this wind of error taketh them up, sometimes that; sometimes taking up one opinion, then changing it for another; this is the fruit of half-Convictions.

2. The other part of our Basis, is a resolution to adhere to the Truth; what likelihood is there, that we should continue, who are not so much as resolved so to do? The heart must be established by Grace, as well as the mind foundly convinced, Heb. 13. 9. Be not carried about with divers and strange Doctrines, for it is a good thing that the heart be established mith grace; as the Apostle speaketh of a purpole not to marry, I Cor. 7.37. He that standeth stedfast in his own heart, &c. So here, Acts 21. 13. I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ: A firm, thorough resolution, is requifite to fortify us against all changes in Religion; otherwise we are but as Trees without a Root; or an House without a Now this resolution of the Foundation. Heart, is by Faith and Love; Faith, Heb. 3. 12. Take beed, left there be in any of you an. evil beart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

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God. Love, 2 Thess. 2. 10. They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, and for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they shall believe a lie. We are not only rooted and grounded in Faith, but rooted and grounded in Love, Eph. 3. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being

rooted and grounded in love, &c.

3. The opposite to this is Levity and inconftancy of mind, that foon quitteth truth without difficulty, or without much hesitancy and refistance, yields to the temptation. The Scripture often taketh notice of this sudden imbracing of Error, Gal. 1. 6. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel; and in the Text, foon shaken in mind; credulity is a lightneß in believing, when we are like Reeds shaken with every wind, Mat. 11. 7. and have a faulty easiness ready to be carried away with every Doctrine, which pretendeth to Truth; The simple believeth every word, Prov. 14. 15. There is a readiness of mind, which is good, but it goeth on sufficient evidence; so the wisdom that is from above is gentle, and easy to be intreated, James 3. 17. and the Bereans were weρθυμοι, Acts 17. 11. They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures, whether these things were so or no: but a readiness of mind differs from a weakness of mind, or a lightness in believing upon slender

and infufficient grounds, they never received the truth with thorough Efficacy, and are prone to Error.

4. The Causes of this Levity and Incon-

stancy of mind are these.

1. Want of folid rooting in the Truth, they receive it hand over head, as the stony ground forthwith sprang up, Mat. 13.5. and 20. ver. Anon they receive it with joy; they do not so soon receive the word, but they as soon quit it.

2. Want of Mortification, 2 Tim. 4. 10. Demas hath for faken us; having loved this prefent World: Lusts are uncertain, fear of men, favour of men, carnal hopes will easily pre-

vail.

3. A certain readiness of mind, which disposeth men to conform, and comply with their Company, as the Looking-Glass representeth every Face that looketh on it, so they are very changeable and unstable as water, as Zedekiah, Jer. 38. 5. The King is not be that can say you nay; soon turned this way and that way.

4. Want of a thorough inclination to God, fo that they are right for a while, or in some things, yet they are not universally true to his interest, I Kings 2. 28. Joab turned after Adonijah, though be turned not after Absolom; Hos 7. 8. Ephraim is a Cake not turned.

5. Want of Holiness, and living up to the truths we know, I Tim. 3.9. Holding the

ingstery of Faith in a pure Conscience. Choice Liquors are best kept in a clean Vessel; men provoke God to desert them, and leave them

to a vertiginous Spirit.

6. Libertinism, men think they may run from one Sect of Christians to another, as the wind of interest bloweth: if they were to turn to Ethnicism, Turcism, or Judaism, they would die rather than change their Religion; but they think the differences among Christians are not of such moment, as to venture any thing upon that account. Every truth is precious, and must be owned in its Season, and it is damnable in it self to do any thing against Conscience, and he that giveth way to a small temptation, will entertain a greater: As a Man that hangeth over a Precipice, when he lets go his hold, will sink surther and surther, till he come to the bottom; therefore it is good to be faithful in a little.

Use. Let us take heed of this evil credu-

lity, and lightness.

1. Till Christians get a settled and sound Judgment; they never have peace within themselves, for sears and scruples arise in the dark, and those that live in error are full of perplexities, and have not that tranquillity of Spirit, which They have, who are fully perswaded in their own mind. Rom. 14.5. Let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind.

2. If hardned in error, confider, your opini-

ons will ordinarily have an influence upon your whole Religion, and will pervert your carriage towards God and Men; your Prayers will smell of your opinions, and be like Balaams Sacrifice offered to God to engage him against his own people; your Love will be dispensed according to the interests of your Faction, I Car. I. 13. Every one of your faith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollo, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?

3. The danger of error to others, Vice is like a duel, error a War, 2 Tim. 2. 17. Their word will cat as doth a Canker. All in Alia bave

turned from me, 2 Tim. 1.15.

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4. There is danger to your felves, though the error be not damnable, 1 Cor. 3. 13. You have not fo full Communion with God.

Thirdly, The third thing is the means, which these Impostors used to seduce them from the Faith; Spirit, Word, Letter; by all which, the Apostle would not have them troubled, and shaken in mind: none of these Engines, which the Seducers used, should draw them from the Truth. What should poor Christians do thus assaulted? Ans. Stick to the Apostolical Doctrine. I shall observe,

Doct. That a Christian should be so perswaded in Religion, that neither Spirit, nor Word, nor Writing, should be able to shake or

unfettle his mind. I shall shew you,

r. What wayes, or what means God hath appointed,

appointed, whereby a man may fettle his choice, as to opinions in Religion.

2. That the word of God will sufficiently fortisse him against all these false ways, by

which Error is wont to be infinuated.

1. For the first, if a Christian would be established and guided aright in the choice of a Religion, he must follow both the light

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of Nature and Scripture.

1. The light of Nature antecedently to any external Revelation, will sufficiently convince us of the being of God, and our dependance upon him, Rom. 1.19, 20. That which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it to them; For the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal Power, and Godhead. For I must know there is a God, or else I cannot be certain that he hath given us a Rule or Revelation of his mind. We begin with what is natural, and then go on to what is Spiritual; Nature will tell us, that there is one God, the first cause of all things; of infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness; that it is reasonable he should be served by those whom he hath made; that he will reward and punish men, as they disobey, or serve and please him; but how God will be ferved, how they shall be rewarded or punished, or how they shall efcape punishment, if after a breach they are willing

willing to return to their duty and obedience to him; this is revealed in the word of God.

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2. The written word shews us the true way of worshipping and pleasing God, and being accepted with him, therefore it is a fufficient direction to us; there is enough to fatisfie Conscience, though not to please wanton Curiofity; As that may quench the thirst of a fober man, that will not fatisfie the lust of a Drunkard: there we are made wife unto Salvation, 2 Tim. 3. 15. Thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wife unto Salvation, and Pfalm 119. 105. Thy word is a light unto my feet, and a lanthorn to my paths: there we have the knowledge of many things evident by the light of nature, discovered with more clearness and certainty: And that which could not be found out by natural light, as Salvation by a Redeemer, or the remedy of our lapfed Estate, which, depending on the fole will, and good pleasure of God, could not be known till it was manifested and revealed by him: when man fat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, it was necessary, that God should some way or other reveal his mind to him by word of mouth, or by writing: By word of mouth, that is, either by Oracles or extraordinary Messengers: that sufficed, while God saw fit to reveal but a few Truths, or such as did not much burden the Memory 5 Memory; and men were long lived, and the Church confined within a small compass of ground, and not liable to so many miseries and changes, as now in the latter Ages; and then he put it into writing, that men may not obtrude upon us their own conceits, but we might have a Standard or Rule of Faith and Manners, Gal. 6. 16. As many at walk according

ing to this Rule, &c.

2. The natural Truths contained in the word of God, are evident by their own light; The supernatural Truths, though they are above natural light, yet they are not against it, or contrary to it, and do fairly accord with those Principles which are naturally known, and are confirmed, partly by an antecedent Testimony, which is Prophecy; partly by an innate evidence in their own frame and contexture; partly by a subsequent Evidence, which is valuable Testimony, as to matter of Fact. The antecedent Teltimony, John 5.39. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me : 2 Pet. 1. 19. We have a more fure word of Prophecy, to which we do well to give beed, as to a light shining in dark places. The innate and concomitant evidence, 2 Cor. 4 2, 3, 4. We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in crastiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending our selves to

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every mans Conscience in the fight of God. For if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are loft, in whom the God of this World hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, less the light of the glorious Goffel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them. The subsequent Testimony, the Apostles, Acts 5. 32. We are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God bath given to them that obey him; they were Eye and Ear Witnesses of great Fidelity and Credit; their Religion forbiddeth them to lie for God, and they were accompanied with the mighty power of the Holy Ghost; not only in giving them fuccess in the face of the learned World, hunting out the Devil every where; but al-x fo by Miracles, divers Signs and Wonders: and they and their followers endured all manner of torments and death, to witness the truth of these things, and transmitted them to us with affurance of Gods owning this Do-Crine.

4. The word being thus stated, and put into a sure Record, it is intelligible enough in all necessary matters at least; for if God should speak or write darkly to his people, especially in necessary things, it is because he could not, or would not speak otherwise: the former is direct Blasphemy, Exod. 4. 11. Who hath made mans month? have not I the Lord. The latter cannot be said, because that is contrary to his goodness.

goodness, Psal. 25. 8. Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will be teach Sinners the way. It is not to be imagined that the great and universal King should give a Law to Mankind, and speak so darkly, that we should have no sure direction from thence, nor be able to know his mind in any of the Duties God hath required of us; or expose us to great difficulties and hardships in the World: And if he had not plainly expressed his will to us, man would never leave writing, and distinguishing himself out of his duty; surely he that will venture his All for Christs sake, had need of a clear warrant to bear him out; for none will hazard all that is near and dear

to him, but for weighty Reasons.

5. Besides, the Illumination of the Holy Spirit doth accompany this word, and make it effectual to us, to shew us God as revealed in Christ, 2 Cor. 4. 6. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: and for Heaven, Eph. 1. 17, 18. Praying, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being inlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his Inheritance in the Saints. He sanctifieth and healeth our Souls.

Souls, and prepareth us for the entertainment of the Truth, that as natural things are naturally discerned, so spiritual things are spiritually discerned, i Cor. 2. 14. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are solishness unto him, neither can be know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

6. There are promites of direction, made to humble and sincere minds, Psal. 25. 9. The meek shall be guide in Judgment, the meek shall be teach his way; to the industrious, Prov. 2. 4, 5. If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God; to the godly and well-disposed, John 7. 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self; so to them that pray much, James 1. 5. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him: They that thus sincerely endeavour to know the will of God, will come to a found established Judgment in the Truth.

a found established Judgment in the Truth.

II. A Christian, that is thus established, is fortified against Spirit, Word, or Writing, or all Suggestions that may perplex his mind.

1. Against pretended Revelations, called

here Spirit.

1. Because having his mind thus settled, he may boldly defy all Revelations pretended to

the contrary: Gal. 1. 8. Though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel than we have preached, let him be accursed: Any Doctrine, if divers or different from, or besides the written word, much more contrary to it, a Christian may reject it, and account it Cursed Doctrine: Therefore neither Church, nor Angel, nor Spirit, is to be heard against it.

2. Because a Christian is upon better terms, having the written word, than if God dealt with him by way of Revelations, 2 Pet. 1. 19. We have BeBaioteeov Noyov, a more fure word of Prophecy; comparing it with the voice from Heaven, of which he spake before; not as if there could be any uncertainty in the Lords Voice, speaking from Heaven, but because a transient Voice is more easily mistaken, or forgotten, than an authentick standing Record, as Samuel thought Eli called him, when it was the Lord; it is quoad nos, though God gave evidence of the Truth of fuch Revelations as he made, yet we have more accommodate means. Our Lord intimateth fuch a thing, Luke 16. 31. If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded, though one rose from the dead. This is the surest ground for Faith to rest upon, of any that ever hath been, or can be given to Sinners, subject to forgetfulness, jealousies, and mistakes.

3. Because it is not rational to expect new Revelation, now the Canon and Rule e

Faith

Faith is closed up, Heb. 2. 1, 2. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip, &cc. Mat. 28. 20. Teaching them to observe all things, what soever I have commanded you. John 17.20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them which shall believe on me through their word.

4. Because if any such be pretended, it must be tryed by the word, Is. 8. 20. To the Law, and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because they have no light in them; So I John 4.1. Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they are of God, because many false Prophets are gone abroad into the World.

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3. Because they that despise ordinary means, and pretend to Vision, Revelation, or Inspiration, are usually such, as are given up by God to a vertiginous Spirit, and cast into the Dungeon of error, for the putsillment of other sins, Mic. 2. 11. If a man walking in the Spirit of falshood do lie, he shall be the Prophet of this people. God will permit those that are both deceivers, and deceived themselves to come amongst them for a Plague to them. Sleidan giveth sad instances of some given up to this phantastical frenzy, that killed their own relations, on pretence of inspiration, and of others that murdered 50000. in one day.

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2. By word or unwritten Tradition; this also should not shake the mind of a setled Christian, for this hath no constat, no evidence of its certainty, and would lay us open to the deceits of men, blinded by their own Interest and Passions; and if such tradition could be produced, as hath unquestionable Authority, it must be tryed by the Scripture, which is every where commended as the publick Standard, and true measure and rule, both of Faith and Manners.

3. Not by Epistle as from us.

 Supposititious writings, which the Church in all Ages hath exploded, and received only those, which are unquestionably theirs, whose

names they bear.

2. False Expositions, these are consuted by inspection of the Context, scope of the Writer, comparing of obscure places, with plain and clear. Thus you see what certainty God hath provided for us to guide us in the way to Eternal Life.

SERMON III.

2 Theff. 2. 3.

Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first; And that man of sin be revealed the Son of perdition.

IN these words we have these two

1. A Caution against the errour, set a-foot at that time, concerning Christs sudden come-

ing to Judgment.

2. The confutation of it: it is disproved by two antecedents and fore-runners of his coming. 1. A general Apostasy, or a desection of the visible Church, from the true State of Christianity. 2. The Revelation of Anti-Christ, described here by his names, and proper Titles, 1. That Man of Sin, 2. And Son of Perdition.

t. Let is speak of the general Apostaly, that must be before Christs coming to Judgment. Except there come a falling away first.

Now concerning it, take these Propositi-

ons.

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1. That Apoltaly is any defection from him to whom we owe, and have performed fubjection: or a falling from that Lord to whom we owe fealty. I am fure in religious matters, it importeth a defection from our right and proper Lord: Thus the Devil is an Apostate, because he abode not in his first estate, Jude 6. And the Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he bath reserved in everlasting Chains, &c. Abode not in the truth, Joh. 8.44. Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the lusts of your Father ye will do: He was a Murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the Truth. That is, for fook his obedience to God, and so became the Ring-Leader of all rebellious Creatures. So it is true of our first Parents: They were Apostates, they did revolt from God, and their obedience to him : Therefore it is faid, Rom. 5. 19. By one mans disobedience many were made Sinners. So of their Posterity, their Apostaly is described by turning back from following the Lord, Zeph. I. 6. and departing from God, that is, his worship and service, Isa. 59.13. In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God. Let us then be agreed of this notion of Apostaly, which is evident, that it is a falling off from the obedience which we owe to our rightful Lord.

2. The Apoltaly mentioned in the Text, was not civil. The falling away of many

Kingdoms

Kingdoms from the Roman Empire: But an Apoltaly of the vilible Church, from him who is Lord of the Church. I prove it partly from the persons to whom the Apostle wrote, who did not intermingle themselves with State affairs, or were not concerned in the Interests of the Roman Empire, further than that they lived within the bounds of it. And this Apostafy must be understood as they would conceive of Apoltaly, with respect to the main cause wherein they were concerned and ingaged: which was the profession of Christianity. Partly, From the use of the word, in the Christian Doctrine, falling away there, is certainly falling away from the Faith, and purity of the Gospel, Luc. 18. 13. Which for a while believe, and in time of temptation full away. And partly because to them it was exprelly foretold, that Tives a TOSHOOVTELL, Some Shall fall away, or depart from the Faith, I Tim. 4. I. Lastly, Because those who are most concerned to maintain the notion of the civil Apostafy, from the Roman Empire, are most notorious in this defection. It is true, the Roman Empire lost Asia, and the places adjacent, by the Invalion of Eastern Nations, but it was thrust out of Rome by the Rebellion of its Subjects, and chiefly by the influence of the Pope there, as Histories manifest: So that this interpretation will not help them a jot, but hurt them not a little. So that here is a defe-Ction

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ction from our proper Lord, and a spiritual

defection, not a civil.

3. The proper Lord of the Christian Church, is Jesus Christ, who hath purchased it with his blood, and died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord of dead and living, Rom. 14.9. and again, Eph. 5. 23. Christ is the head of the Church, and the Saviour of the body. He that saveth, and recovereth the Church, out of the general Apostasy of Mankind; and restoreth them to their due obedience, and proper happiness, He only is sit to be head of the Church; and this only is Christ; we expect no opposition here.

4. The Apostasy from the Lord will be determined, chiefly by these two things. By undermining his Authority, or destroying the interests of his Kingdom; by these two we may understand the falling away, which is to

come first.

I. By undermining his Authority. Certainly his Authority is undermined, when others prefume to usurp his place without his leave. Therefore to super-induce an universal head of the visible Church, which Christ never appointed, is manifestly to usurp his Authority, though the party so intruding, should pretend to hold his Soveraignty from Christ, and under him: yet this is treason against Christ, for here is an authority set up without, and therefore against his consent. Put the Case in a temporal

poral Kingdom, and the thing will be clear. And thus the Pope is an usurping head, of a Rebellion against Christ. Where did Christ institute him to take this Office? Tu es Petrus. is fuch a stale pretence, so often baffled and defeated, and pretended upon so small grounds, as that Christ hereby conveyed singular authority to Peter, above the rest of the Disciples : That from Peter it descendeth to his Successors, and to those of Rome (if ever he were at Rome) and not those of Antioch; that it is endless to purfue the absurdities of this impertinent allegation. The argument holdeth the more strongly, when the Pope condemneth all the Churches, that will not be his Subjects; how holy, good, and obedient to the Laws of Christ soever they be. Surely if any thing, this is an Apoltaly, or a revolt from our rightful Lord, and to confent to this Rebellion, and Ufurpation, is to be drawn into a Conspiracy against Christ, and to submit to the head of the most pernicious Schism, that did ever rend the Church of Christ; and to betray the Liberty of the People of our Lord, to a Tyrannical Usurpation.

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2. Or corrupting and destroying the interests of his Kingdom; certainly, wherever there is a degeneration from the purity and simplicity of the Gospel, the interests of Christs Kingdom are destroyed. I fear (saith the Apostle) 4 Cor. 11.3. lest by any means as the

Serpent

Serpent beguiled Eve through his fubtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The ancient, pure, Apostolick Christianity doth only preserve the Interests of Christs Kingdom in the World; there is no way of fafety but by keeping there; for fince Godliness is a mystery, and we shall see afterwards, the iniquity that is contrary, is a mystery also, 2 Thess. 2. 7. The mystery of iniquity doth already work, We need to be exactly. careful to keep close to the doctrine, worship, and Discipline of the first Gospel Church; for if these had remained pure, Antichrist had never rifen. Christs Institutions would have preserved his Interests in the World. But as these were corrupted, the Apostasy prevailed. When the Faith of the Gospel was turned into dead opinions, and curious questions, if not direct errours; and the worship of the Gospel was corrupted, by giving divine honour to Saints and Angels, and turned into a theatrical Pomp, and the Pageantry of empty Ceremonies, which eclipse the Majesty and fplendour of it; and the Discipline of the Church into a temporal domination, and all is carried in the World by sides and interests, that Christianity looketh like another thing, a defign Calculated for the present World, rather than a serious preparation for the World to come; Then certainly, there is an Apoltafy, and a defection from Christ; however the corrupt

corrupt manners of the Church be varnished over with the name of Christianity. There is a degeneration questionless, and that is Apostaly, in a Mystery, such as this is, though not

an open revolt from Christ.

But to make this more evident to you, let us consider what the Kingdom of Christ is The Gospel Kingdom, is a Kingdom of Light. Life and Love. Opposite to Light, is ignorance and errour; to Life a Religion that confifts of thews, dead rites, and empty Ceremonies; to Love, uncharitableness, malice, and especially hatred of the power of Godlines: now where these prevail eminently, there is an opposite Kingdom set up to the Kingdom of Christ; certainly, a falling off from his Kingdom. That is to fay, where in opposition to Light, errour is taught, and ignorance is counted the Mother of Devotion, and people are restrained from the means of Knowledge; as if the height of Christian Faith and Obedience, did confist in an implicite believing what the Church believeth: and where instead of Life, men place their whole Religion in superficial Rites, and Ceremonies, and some trifling acts of feeming Devotion, and exteriour Mortifications: and instead of love to God and Souls, all things are facrificed to private Ambition; and forcing Consciences with the highest penalties and persecutions, to submit to their corruptions, There is a manifest subversion

version of the interests of Christs Kingdom. In short, Gods witnesses were slain in that City, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, and our Lord was crucifyed, Rev. 11.8. That City which answereth to Sodom for impurity, to Egypt for Idolatry, and to Jerusalem for persecution of the Saints; there may you find the

great Apostaly.

5. This Apoltaly from our Lords Authority. and the interests of his Kingdom, is some notable and discernable Apostasy, and the Head and Patron thereof is Antichrift; The defection is not of one, or a few, or many in divers Churches: there have always been back-sliders from the Faith, I Joh. 2. 19. They went out from us, but they were not of us: and the Spirit of Antichrist wrought in the Apostles days, I Joh. 2. 18. As you have heard that Antichrift shall come, even now there are many Antichrists: and again, 1 Joh. 4.3. we are told of the Spirit of Antichrist, and this is that spirit of Antichrist whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the World. Then described to be afterwards, Verse 5. a Worldly Spirit. They are of the World, and speak of the World, and the World heareth them: Though they profess Christianity, Carnal, Worldly Hypocrites, which never Conquered the fleshly mind, and interest, have the Spirit of Antichrist: These obscure the light, and obstruct the life and love of the Gospel, They that wholly

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wholly affect a life of pomp and ease in the Now this hath always been in all Ages: The false Christians forget, their hopes are built upon a Crucified Christ, and are to be derived to them from a Glorified Christ in the other World. Crucified in this World, and Glorified in the next, which indeed are the two considerations, that keep Christianity pure and lively: That all was purchased by a Crucified Christ, and all is dispensed by a Glorified Christ; and I wish you would offner think of it. But the great Apoltaly is eminently found in some external visible Church, where these corruptions are generally received and defended. For the head of that Church is Antichrist: where Doctrine is corrupted, and the worship mingled with Idolatry, and the Government an Usurpation, and bent against the Holy Seed, that defire to worthip God in Spirit and in Truth; there is this manifest revolt from, and a Rebellion against God and Ghrist, though they push with the Horns of the Lamb.

That the Papilts are a corrupt Sect of Christians, is beyond dispute, to any that will try their Religion by the Scriptures; and that they are far more corrupt than the Protestants. Reformed Churches, will also soon appear by the comparison, or a view of both Churches. But whether they are so corrupt, as to become the Seat of Antichrist, is the matter under debate.

bate. Therefore let any one confider, where the eminent Apoltaly is to be found. Who are they that invade Christs Authority, by fetting up an Universal Head over all Christians? Who are they that establish the Doctrine of Damons, or revive the worship of a middle fort of Powers, between God and mortal men? I Tim. 4. I. who through Hypocrify invent fo many lies to maintain it, and when Christians should keep themselves from Idols, I 706.5.21. yet in defiance of this, worship Angels, and other Creatures, Col. 2. 18. Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility. and worshipping of Angels, &c. and erect the Images of Saints, commanding and compelling men to adore them, and pray to them; who are they that are not contented with the one only Mediatour? 1 Tim. 2.5. For there is one God, and one Mediatour between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. 1 Cor. 8.5. For though there be that are called Gods, whether in Heaven, or in Earth (as there be Gods many, and Lords many.) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him; but fet up other Mediatours of Intercession? Who are they that plead for Indulgences? and the supererogatory satisfaction of the Saints, as gathered into the Treasure of the Church, and so profitable for the remission on of fins? and condemn them who think

the contrary? Who are they that keep Believers from reading the Scriptures, when they are so expresly injoined to do it, Joh. 5. 39. and Pfal. 1.2. But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate day and night: That deny one part of the Lords Supper to his Disciples, notwithstanding his Institution to the contrary? 1 Cor. 11.25,26. After the same manner also be took the Cup, when he had supped, saying, This Cup is the New Testament in my blood: This do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me : for as oft as ge eat this bread, and drink this Cip, ye do shew forth the Lords death till be come. It were endless to instance in all, I shall speak more of it in the following Verses.

6. This Apostasy is not only forbidden, but foretold as a thing that would certainly come to pass. This consideration is necessary for di-

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r. Because the Papists ask how this can be consistent with Christs care of his Church, that there should be an universal Apostasy, and decay of Christian Religion? who hath promised, The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Answ. That promise is made chiefly to the invisible Church, or community of the Elect, wo not to all the visible Societies of the Christians, against whom the Devil can and hath prevailed, and doth daily, to the destruction of many Souls. And we say not that the whole

visible Church did apostatize, though all are

faulty.

2. Because some require the time when this Apostasy began to be particularly assigned, and noted to them, and by what persons these corruptions were first introduced, or else deny that any fuch thing hath been. But the Case is clear: it began to work betimes, only it wrought in a mystery: but cannot we prove a man to be old, unless we prove the first moment when his gray Hairs began to appear, or his natural force to be abated? Who can tell every step of the progress of the corruption of the Jewish Church, and why should the like be required of the Christian? This Dunghil of corruption was not raised in one Age: and suppose that in tract of time Authors be forgotten, matters of Faith are not to be contra-# dicted because of the defect of History, and yet Histories are not altogether wanting in the Case, only in things that came in by degrees, they are not necessary. In the introducing of the general Apoltaly, some erred in the simplicity of their hearts, as the people followed Absolom, 2 Sam. 15. 11. But shall we deny a thing to be done, because we cannot speak the particular moments of time, and circumstances of them when, and how it was done? Shall we say the pointer in the Dial passeth not, because we do not see its motion? Might not the Priests judge of a Leprosy, though

they knew not how it was contracted? Ini-

quity mystical did by degrees prevail.

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3. Because some think if we should grant fuch an Apostaly, it would interrupt the whole course of visible Christianity, and so deprive the World of a Ministry and Ordinances, till Christ send some new Nuncio's from Heaven, or by miracle at least authorize a new Miniftry, that may be owned by the World, and received by his people. A vain conceit! for though this Apoltaly is foretold, that it should come to pass, yet it is also foretold, that Christ will be with the Apostles, and their Successors, to the end of the World, Math. 28. 20. and prayed for all them that should believe in him through their word, Job. 17.20. and though the Church was corrupted by degrees, yet all this while it ceased not to be a Church, nor the Officers thereof to be Christs Ministers: " when the Ten Tribes fell away, yet God till their diffolution continued the Spirit of Prophecy amongst them; and in the Christian Church a Ministry, though many had their calling from such who consented to the incroachments of Antichrift. God had not fo wholly cast off his people, but that there was a Ministry and Ordinances; their Ministry was a true Ministry, and the Baptism a true Baptilm, to be owned in foro externo: for these things remain whilst any thing of Christianity remaineth. In a body mangled with wounds,

or all over grown with fores, there is a life remaining; and so some Functions and Offices of Life. God called Idolatrous Ifrael his people, and was not angry with them for circumcising their Children, but for offering them to Moloch, Ezek. 16. 20, 21. But of this in the next Verse, where Antichrist is said to sit in the Church of God.

2. The Revelation of Antichrist. And that man of sin shall be revealed, the Son of perdition; where two things are notable. 1. His rise and appearing. 2. The names and titles given to

him.

1. His rise and appearing, expressed in the word [revealed] that is, that great and chief Antichrist, upon that Apostasy or falling away, shall be extant and shew himself to the World. A thing is said to be revealed two ways; Either when it is in being, or when it is discovered; both ways are proper here. He shall publickly appear, exercising a Tyranny in the World, or cast off his Vail, and shew himself in his Colours: God by his Providence permitteth him to be, and by the doctrine of the Gospel discovereth his impostures to all those who have no mind to be deceived.

2. The names or titles given to him, they are two. 1. The man of fin, wherein he is compared and likened to Antiochus. 2. The Son of Perdition; wherein he is compared and

likened to Judas.

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For the first, The Jews called Antiochus, The man of fin, 1 March. 2. 48. They gave not the power to the Sinner; in the Greek, while as αμαρίολώ, They gave not the Horn to the Sinner; The Syriac Version hath it, They suffered not the Horn of the Sinner to be lifted up: and Verse 62. Fear not the words of the man of sin, άπο λόγων ανδρός αμαρίωλε μπ φοβηθήλι, From the words of the man the Sinner be not afraid. Now why did they call Antiochus the man of fin? Because he sought to alter the Religion of the People, and by cruelty to introduce a change of Worship and Idolatry, and such Laws as he would fet up: now according to this pattern, Antichrist is a man of sin; that is, either a man given up to all fin eminently, a Sinner addicted unto fin, and a Ring-leader of others unto fin, either by fraud and violence, or as he giveth incouragements and encitements to fin; or as a special kind of Sinner, an Usurper and Invader of the Empire of the Son of God. So was Antiochus. So was Antichrift. Now how much open fin is pradised, allowed, and maintained in the Papacy, I lift not now to rake into, their own stories Speak enough. The Sodomy, Blasphemy, Incest, Adulteries, Sorceries, Murders, Treasons, Parricides, which they have authorifed and countenanced, Histories witness, that hardly hath the World yielded a more abominable fort of men, than have fate in that Chair of pestilence.

pestilence. This I am sure of, that a man can fin no where at so cheap a rate as in Popery, where what by dividing their sins into mortal and venial, and these expiated by a little pennance, accompanied with a single Attrition, and bare grief and trouble, because of the punishment; what by Faculties, Pardons, Licences, Dispensations, Indulgences, sin is di-

stinguished out of the Conscience.

But because he is called the man of sin, here it cometh fitly to be inquired, whether Antichrist be an individual person? for that man of fin would feem to be some single person; No, he is put for a Society and succession of men, that make up the head of the Apostate State. As one Lyon figured the whole Kingdom of the Babylonians, and one Bear the Kingdom of the Medes and Persians, and one Leopard the Kingdom of the Gracians, Dan. 7. and there the fourth Beast is the fourth Kingdom: So one person that succession of men, that head the Revolters from Christ. So Dan. 8. a Goat figured a fuccession of Kings: So the Asfyrian, Ifa. 10. 5. several Kings in that Empire: So Isa. 14. 9. The King of Babylon, meaning not one but many. So this man of sin doth not note a fingle man, but a fuccession of men, a body politick or corporate, under one oppofite head to the Kingdom of Christ: So the man of God is put for all faithful Ministers, 2 Tim.3. 17. So, Honour the King, 1Pet. 2. 17 Series

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Series Regum. So o apputepeus, Heb. 9. 25. The High Priest every year entreth into the holy place; meaning not one, but the succession of the order; and in reason it must needs be so here. Because Antichrist from his beginning to his end, from his rise and Revelation, till his ruine and destruction, will take up such a long tract of time, as cannot fall within the Age of any one man; even from the time of the Aposteles, till the end of the World. Antichrist is the Head of the Apostase: for here the Apostasie, and the Revelation of the man of sin, are conjunct; now the mysterious Apostasie

could not be perfected in a fliort time.

2. The Son of Perdition: wherein he is likened to Judas, Joh. 17.12. None of them is lost but the Son of Perdition. Him he resembleth in Covetousnes, Treachery, and fi- " nal destruction. The Term may be explained, either passively, or actively. 1. Passively, As one condemned to everlafting destruction. As the Son of Death, is one condemned to die, 2 Sam. 12.5. He shall be a Son of death; we translate it, He shall surely die: So Children of wrath, Eph. 2. 3. So here, Son of Perdition. 2. Actively, Bringing destruction upon himfelf and others. One that shall destroy others: and so he is called Abaddon, and Apollyon, Rev. 9.11. and is opposite to Christ who is the Avthor of Salvation, Heb. 5.9. but Antichrift of destruction: And let us see the parallel be-

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tween him and Judas: for the person is a Type, as well as the name hath a fignificancy: Antichrist then is like Judas, in Profession a Disciple of Christ; in Office, a Governour of the Church; but in practice a Traytor: As they faid of the blind man, John 9. 9. Some said, this is he, others, he is very like him: The Pope boasteth, that his Seat is Apostolical, his Chair is Peters Chair, and that he is the Successour of the Apostle: Grant it, but there is an errour of the person, not of Peter but of Judas. Let us see the Parallel. 1. Judas was not a stranger, but a pretended Friend and Apostle, Acts 1. 17. He was numbred with us, and obtained part of his Ministry. Turks and Infidels are Enemies to Christ, but Antichrist seeketh to undermine him, under a pretence of Friendship: armaer O, is one in shew for, and in effect against Christ: and the Beast in the Revelation is said to push with the 6 horns of the Lamb, Rev. 13. 11. If he were a professed Enemy, what mystery were there in it? but mystery was written upon the Womans forehead, Rev. 17.5. and here ver. 7. The mystery of iniquity. It is wisdom to discern the false Prophet, Rev. 13. 18. but there needeth no great wisdom to discover an open and profelled Adversary.

2. He fold Christ for a small matter. Omnia Rome venalia, Pardons, Indulgences, freedom from Purgatory, all to be bought with mo-

ney, and it is a small matter, considering the things put to sale; The pardon of sins; the Souls of men redeemed with Christs precious blood. The Antichristian State maketh a Market of Religion: Truth is made to yield to

interest and profit.

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3. Judar betrayed Christ with a Kis, under a pretence of honouring him, Luke 22. 48. Tesus faid unto bim, Judas, betrayest thon the Son of man with a Kiss ? Antichrit is a true Adversary of Christ, though he pretend to adore him, as those that murthered the prefent Prophets, would by all means beautify. the Tombs of the Prophets deceased, and bear a respect to their memories. Matth. 23.30. He pretendeth to be his Servant, yea a Servant of Servants, but is really his Enemy. The Apostle telleth us of some, that were Enemies to the Cross of Christ, Phil. 3. 18. Who to appearance such friends to the Cross, as the rabble of nominal Christians? but they are opposers of his spiritual Kingdom, vertue, and power of the Cros: You have Crucifixes every where, Painted, Carved, Gilded; they are ready to worship the Cross with a holy Worship: they set it in their Temples, Altars, wear it in their bosoms, and where ever they meet it, shew it reverence; adorn it with Gold, Silver, and precious Stones; their Popes and Prelates have it carried before them, and are # not these friends of the Cross? No, they live a Worldly

Worldly, sensual life, and all their Religion tendeth thereunto: therefore Enemies of the Cross of Christ, because they mind earthly things. This is right Antichrist-like, to betray

Christ under a colour of Adoration.

4. Judas was a guide to them that came to take Christ; and one main work of Antichrist is, to be a Ring-Leader in persecuting for Religion. Christ is in Heaven, death hath no more power over him: his natural body is above abuse, but his mystical body still suffereth: Acts 9. 6. Why persecutest thou me? Antichrist is the head of the persecuting State, others are his Emissaries and Agents, to take Christ in his members. It is a politick Religion, that must be carried on with Worldly Artisces, with power and Cruelty.

Lastly, The Covetousness of Judas is set forth. He was a thief, and one that carried the bag, Joh. 12. 6. England to its bitter cost knoweth the poling exactions of the Papacy: All its dealing with us was to fill the Bag, out of this Puteus inexhaustus. Now all these things should open our Eyes; we may behold the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition; one egge is not more like to another, than Judas and

Antichrist.

1. Use is to persuade us to a detestation of what is Antichristian. And to that end, let us mark the progress of the Text. 1. The Apostasse made was for Antichrist. 2. Antichrist

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rifing upon the Apostasie, becometh a man of Sin. And 3. The Man of Sin is also the Son of Perdition.

1. Let me begin first with the falling away. There is a twofold falling away, either from the power and practice of Godliness, or from a true Religion to a false, particularly to Poperv. I. I begin with the falling away from the power and practice of Godlines; though the profession be not changed; and the rather partly, because this disposeth to the entertainment of errour. When a people that are carried with great fervour and vigour of zeal for a while, lose their affections to good, and return to a worldly sensual life, then the byas of their hearts doth easily prevail against the light of their understandings: And so unfanctified men may the fooner be drawn to Apoltaly; they never felt the quickning virtue of Faith, and were never wrought by it to the true love of God, or an holy and heavenly mind and life: And partly also, because if a lively Christianity had been kept up, Antichrist had never risen in the World: And it is the way to keep him out still. When the Servants slept, the Enemy sowed Tares, Matth. 13. A fleepy Religion, and corruption of manners, made way for corruption of doctrine, worthip, and order: It was with the Church according to the Spoules complaint; I fleep but my beart waketh, Cant. 5. 2. Some care there

there was, but much drowfiness and deadness in Religion, and that produced the great Apostalie. Partly too, because there is such a complyance between the nature of Antichristianism, and the temper of a carnal heart: For superstition and profaneness, grow both upon the same Root: A lothness to displease the flesh; the sensual nature of man is such, that it is loth to be croffed, and that breedeth profaneness: For wherefore do men ingulf themselves in all manner of sensualities, but because they are loth to deny their natural appetites and defires, and row against the stream of flesh and blood; but will walk in the way of their own heart, and in the fight of their own eyes, Eccles. 11. 9. Again, if nature be to be crossed, it is only a little: It shall only be in some external actions, and observances, and dead rudiments, which never kill our lusts, nor promote the divine life: And this pleasing superstition shall make up a Religion, which is a fit pillow for a carnal heart to fleep upon. Popery is the easiest Religion for the flesh that can be found out; for it never biteth nor disturbeth their lusts. The duties of it, are like the Pharifees falting, which our Lord compareth to old Wine, Matth. 9. 17. Fit for old dried skin Bottles. Well, take heed, of falling away from a lively Godlines: no man entreth seriously upon Religion, but with fome talting or rejoicing, Heb. 6. now as this decayeth

decayeth we fall off. The Heavenly life is obfiructed, if not choaked and quite loft. Now to prevent this observe two things. 1. Your coldness in duties. 2. Your boldness in sin-

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1. Coldness in duties, when the will and affections grow more remiss, and the worship of God which keepeth up the remembrance of him, is either omitted, or performed perfunctorily, and in a careless and stupid manner, Jer. 2.32. My people have forgotten me days without number. Job 27.10. Will be always call upon God, will be delight himself in the Almighty? God chargeth Israel with growing weary of him, and it began in not calling upon him, Isa. 43.22. Now when you seldom think or speak of God, and do not keep up a delightful Communion with him, there is a falling away.

2. Boldness in sinning, when men lose their tenderness and strictness, and the awe of God is lessened in their hearts; and they do not only sin freely in thought, but freely in act, have not that hatred of sin, and watchfulness that formerly, but more abandon themselves to a carnal life. You are falling off from God a-pace, 2 Pet. 2. 20. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the World, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning: At sirst the heart checked you for sin, but you did not kindly

kindly come off, were not troubled about it, hoped God would pardon it; and then you are bold to venture again, and fo by degrees are entangled in the fenfual and worldly life. Now consider the causes of it: 1. Want of Faith in God, Heb. 3. 12. Take heed Brethren, left there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. You have not a found belief of his being and presence.

2. Want of love to God, Rev. 2. 4, 5. Nevertheless I have (somewhat) against thee, because thou hast left thy first love: Remember therefore from whence thou art faln, and repent; and do thy first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. Your hearts decline from that love you had to him, and his ways; and then your work is intermitted. 3. Want of a due sense of the World to come, Heb. 10. 39. But we are not of them who draw back to perdition, but of them that believe, to the faving of the Soul. 4. The love of the present World, 2 Tim. 4. 10. For Demas bath for saken me, having loved this present World. The more that is valued, the more your hearts are taken off from things to come, and the care about them; you have too great a liking, either to the profits of the World, I Tim. 6. 10. The love of money is the root of all evil; which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the Faith; or else the pleasures of the World, 2 Tim.

Tim. 3.4. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. As the inclination of the heart groweth stronger to sensual pleasures, your thoughts of God are less serious and pleasing to you. Now look to these things, lest you grow quite weary of God, and the holy life, which once you had an affection unto.

2. From a true Religion to a false: which may be done two ways. 1. Out of corruption of mind. 2. Out of vile affection.

1. Out of weakness of mind, as those do that were never well grounded in the truth, Eph. 4. 14. That we henceforth be no more Children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of ductrine, by the slight of men, (and) cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, 2 Pet. 3. 16. In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned, and unstable, wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction. Therefore we need to be established: but the forfaking of a truth we were bredin, usually cometh from some falseness of Heart: Some errours are so contrary to the new nature, that they discern them by the unction, Joh. 2. 20. But ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know all things.

2. Out of vile affection, when they for lake the truth, for the advantages of a fleshly Worldly life, some places to be gotten by it, Oc. and as the Whore of Babylon hath a Golden

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Cup, Riches and Preferments, wherewith it inviteth its Proselytes; now these are worse than the former, for they sell the birthright, Heb. 12.16. Lest there be any fornicator or prophane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright: Oh! Christians take beed to your selves. Apostasy brought Antichrist into the Church: Let it not jure postliminio, bring him back again into the Land, or into

your hearts.

2. The next step is the man of sin: As the first Apostaly of Adam and Eve brought sin into the World, so this great Apostaly brought in a deluge of fin into the Church, and defiled the Holy Society, which Christ had gathered out of the World. Idolatry is often called Adultery, or Fornication; spiritual un-= cleanness disposeth to bodily, and bodily to spiritual: Usually a corrupt state of Religion, and corrupt manners, go together: otherwise the dance and the fiddle would not fuit. The World cannot lie quiet in a course of fin, if there be not some Libertine, Atheistical Doctrine, and carnal worship to countenance it, Rev. 11. 10. And they that dwell upon the earth, shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall Jend gifts one to another: because these two Prophets tormented them that dwelt on the Earth.

3. The man of sin is also the Son of Perdition.

1. Actively: False Religions strangely efferate

efferate the mind: Jude 11. These go in the way of Cain, and Holea 5.2. Revolters are profound to make slaughters: men think no cruelty nor dishonesty unlawful, which serveth to promote the interests of their Sect, and lose // all Charity to those that are not of their way. 2. Passively, shall be destroyed. Sometimes grievous Judgments come in this World, for the corruptions of Religion; but in the World to come, dreadful is the end of Apostates. 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again intangled therein, and overcome: The latter end is worse with them than the beginning; for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they had known it, to turn from the Holy Commandement, delivered unto them.

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SERMON IV.

2 Theff. 2. 4.

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped: So that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God shewing himself that he is God.

N this matter of Antichrift, we have made this Progress. First, that he arose upon and by a falling away, from the ancient pure state of Christianity. Secondly, That the Holy Ghost points him out by his names and Titles, which are two, the man of Sin, wherein he is resembled to Antiochus, and the Son of Perdition, wherein he is resembled to Judas. As Antiochus he is one, that by force and power should change the Laws and Ordinances, and compel men to his abominations. As Judas he should betray Christ by a Kiss, for Worldly gain, and be one that is in pretence an Apostle, but indeed a real Adversary to Christ. Now after the Apostle had pointed at him, by his names and Titles, he describeth him by his practices, wherein his names and titles are verified; for here he proveth, that

he should be as Antiochus, by his exalting him felf above all that is called God, which is faid of Antiochus, Dan. 11.36. And the King shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt and magnify himself above every God, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods. And as Judas, one fitting in the Temple of God, that is, he litteth there as exercifing a publick Ecclefiaftical Office; yea, challenging the highest Seat in it. He sitteth there Potestate Regiminis, by the power of his Government; he doth Chathedratica potestate prasidere (Estius.) His fitting there as chief, shews him as Judas; his fitting here as God, and exalting himself above all that is called God, sheweth him Antiochus.

But to handle the words more closely, An-

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1. As opposite to Christ: 6 articleped of Pride chiefly. Christ was the pattern of humility, Antichrist is the King of Pride: Christ would not so much as assume to himself an Authority to divide the Inheritance between two Brethren, Luke 12. 14. Man, who made me a Judge, or a Divider over you? but Antichrist will depose Kings, and dispose of Kingdoms.

2. The instances of his Pride. 1. In exalting himself above all human power, who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped: 2. An usurpation of divine

honour; he as God, fitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Let us open these things more particularly.

1. He is represented in the term avlineius , as one diametrically opposite to Christ, and contrary to him, who is the true Head, and Lord of the Church, Acts 10. 36. He is Lord over all; but Antichrist opposeth himfelf, that is, sheweth himself in a quite contrary appearance. That which is most remarkable in Christ, and should be in all his followers, is humility. He expressed a wonderful contemp, of the riches and greatness of the World, and all the honour which is of man; taking the form of a Servant, and making himself of no reputation, and living a mean inferiour life. He came not to be ministred unto; but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many, Matth. 20, 28. He kept no state, nor affected pomp of Attendants, though he were Lord of all, yet he became poor to make us rich, 2 Cor. 8.9. But it may be this was proper to him, doth he expect, it from his Servants and Officers, in the Church? Yes, this the grace which he hath recommended to all his Followers; Matth. 11. 29. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly. But especially to the Ministers of the Gospel: our Lord foresaw what spirit would work in them, and therefore he forewarned them of Pride and Lordlines, Matth. 20. 25, 26. Te know that the Princes

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Princes of the earth do exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise Authority upon them: but it shall not be fo among you, but mbosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister. Among Christs Servants, he that is chief, must be chief in service; even as a ser-vant unto all, Luke 22. 26. He that is chief, as be that doth serve. Domination, Greatness, Principality and Power, is allowed in the Civil State, for there it is necessary; yet it is excluded the Church. This affecting preheminence and chiefness is the bane of the Church. It is taxed as a great fin in Diotrephes, 3 Job. g. Be it either over their fellow Labourers, or the people of the Lord. You fee how tender the Apoltles were in this point; every where they disclaim this affectation of Lordthip, 2 Cor. 1. 24. Not that we are Lords of your Faith, but helpers of your joy. And Peter recommendeth it to his Fellow Elders, 1 Pet. 1.3. Neither as being Lords over Gods Heritage, but being examples to the flock. And if the Apostles would not assume Lordship, who may? It is true, there is a Government in the Church, and the people are to obey their Guides, Heb. 13. 17. And to have them highly in bonour, for their works Jake, 1 Theffa. 5. 13. but yet the Pastors of the Church should govern by Light and Love, not by pomp and force, and not be known by fuch pomp and Authority as begets fear. Well now, let us fee

fee the opposite state. If humility and meekness be in the very Essence of Christianity, and woven throughout the whole frame of it, then it is Antichristian to be Lordly, and proud, especially in them who pretend to be Successors of Christ, and his Apostles. Now in the Pope and his Adherents, you will see the most odious pride let forth, that ever the World was conscious unto, without any Cloak and shame. And all their business is to get power: what defigns they have for preferment in the World, how studiously they have, and do prosecute it, they blush not to own openly, before Angels or Men. This worldly Ambition to rise higher and higher, is their defign and Trade of Life. As the Bishop of Rome, at first from the chief Pastor of that City, affected to be an Archbishop over the Suburbian Towns and Cities: then a Patriarch over many Cities, and because two opposed him in Italy a long time, Ravenna and Milane, he gets power over them, and then he must be Occumenial Bishop over all the World. But Constantinople refisheth for a long time, yea, arrogateth within the Empire the same Titles. Who more earnest against it, than Gregory whom they call the Great, and more forward to charge the affuming of this Title as Antichriftian? But then, when once they began by powerful means, and many indirect couries, to be owned as univerfal Bishop: then inlarging their bounds, not only

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only over the Ecclefiastical Power, but Civil and all Kings and Princes must stoop to them. as well as Bishops. So that here was the progress and gradation, first from the Chief Presbyter, a Bishop over many Presbyters in the same City; then a Metropolitan over many Bishops, in one Province; then a Patriarch over many Provinces, in one Dioces (for in the Roman Division there were seven Provinces in one Diocess) then Universal Bishop in the whole World, then the only Shepherd and Bishop, and others but his Substitutes; pretty steps of ambitious incroaching! But yet exalting himself further, challenging all power in Heaven and Earth. And the like is practifed by his followers (at this day in the Church of Rome) from private Priests, they grow up into fome Prelature, as Arch-Deacons, Deans, then a Bilhoprick, then a better or richer; then Archbishops, Cardinals, then Pope. And the Devil is grown to impudent by the help > of these Churchmen, as that it is counted a great piece of spiritual wisdom, publickly owned in the World, to be able by these steps to get higher and higher, and Lord it over Gods Heritage; as if ambitious affectation were the honour of Christianity, and Gospel humility would expose the Church to scorn; and pomp and grandeur were a greater Ornament to Religion than Grace: when in the mean time they have nothing to prove them G 2

to be true Pastors of the Church, but Judas his Kis, a little owning of Christ to counte-

nance their Ambition.

Secondly, the particular instances, wherein the pride of Antichrist is set forth, are two.

1. His exalting himself above all humane Powers: He opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped. Here the object is set forth by two terms.

1. All that is called God. 2. Or worshipped. They both

belong to the same thing.

1. That which is called God, that is Magistrates, Princes, and Kings, Pfal. 81. 1. He judgeth among the Gods, and verse the fixth, I have faid ye are Gods, all of you are Children of the mast high; and John 10. 34, 35. It is written in your Law, I said ye are Gods. If he call them Gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken, &c. God hath cloathed Magistrates with his own honour, so far, that he hath put his name upon them: and their eminency is a part of his Image, as it lyeth in Superiority, Dominion, and Power. Though Magistrates be but like their Brethren, as to their common nature, yet in respect of their Office, they have the glorious Title of [Gods] conferred upon them, as being his Vicegerents, and bearing his perion in Government, they are honoured with So that without impeachment of Blasphemy, those that excel in the Civil power may

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may be called Gods. Now over these Antichrist exalteth himself, that is, above all Kings and Potentates.

Secondly, The other notion is, & σέβασμα, we render it, or is worshipped, the Greek word is, whatever is held in the highest degree of reverence, whatever is August, or Illustrious, as the Emperours of Rome were called Zeßasoi, Acts 25.21. Paul appealed to be referred to the hearing of Augustus; it is To ZeBa-, not Augustus Casar, who was then dead, but his Successour. Well then, here is the Character of Antichrist: That he exalteth himself above all Civil Authority, Authored and permitted of God, not only above ordinary Magistrates, but Kings and Emperours. Now we find in History no less than twenty Kings and * Emperours, trampled under foot by the Pope of Rome, some of whom he had excommunicated, and deposed from their Kingdoms, and their people dispensed withal, in denial of their subjection to them; others brought to cruel shameful Deaths, and their Kingdoms miserably rent and torn, to the destruction of Millions of men, by their means. He that hath any knowledge of the Histories in Christendom, cannot but know these things; how he treadeth on their necks, kicketh off their Crowns with his Feet, and hath brought them to the vilest submissions. And if Kings and Emperours have received more spirit and courage,

n, th of er courage, and the Popes of Rome learned more modelty now adays, thanks is due to the light of the Gospel, which hath shined so far, and to such a degree, as to the consuming of Antichrist, though not to his utter destruction.

Secondly, The next instance of his pride, is his usurpation of divine honour, expressed in two clauses. I. The one sheweth the usurpation it self, That he as God, sitteth in the Temple of God. 2. The other, the degree of it, shewing himself as God. Both must be explained

and vindicated.

I. For the usurpation it self, he sitteth as God in the Temple of God. By the Temple of God, is meant the Church, I Cor. 3. 16, 17. Know ye not, that ye are the Temple of God, and the spirit of God dwelleth in you: if any man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are. So 2 Cor. 6. 16. What agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? for ye are the Temple of the living God. The external visible Church which prosessed the Faith of Christ, and beareth his name. So that the place wherein Anti-christ shall arise, is the visible Christian Church: not Rome Ethnick, but Christian.

But is then the Church of Rome, the Church of Christ? Answ. It was one part of it before it was perverted; it usurpeth still that name, it retaineth some relique of a Church

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mangled as it is: (faith Calvin in his Epistles) I think I have given some strong reasons, that it yet retaineth some shew of a Church Now in this Temple of God he litteth as an Officer and Bishop there, as I before explained it: And whereas other Princes are faid to Reign fo many years, the Pope is faid to fit fo long. It's his Sedes, his Cathedral or Seat. And again, here he is faid to fit as God, that is, as God Incarnate: for Christ is the true and proper Lord of the Church. None should Reign there but he. And the name of this Man of fin is not Antitheos, but arrivers @; not one that directly invadeth the properties of the supreme God, but of God Incarnate, or Christ as Mediatour; he fitteth negatively, not as a Minister, but positively as supreme Lord upon Earth, whom all must adore and worship; and Kings and Princes kils his feet. In thort, he usurpeth the Authority due to Christ, Now I shall prove that by a double argument.

1. By usunping the Titles due to Christ. For he that will make bold with names, will make bold with things: as to be, Sponsus Ecclesia; the Husband of the Church. As Innocent called the Church Sponsum sum, his Spouse. Caput Ecclesia, the head of the Church, which is proper to the Saviour of the body. Supreme, wishle, and universal head, which only Christ is, who hath promised to be with her to the end of the World, and will be visible to those who

who do at length approach his Court in Heaven, where his Seat is. To be chief Pastor: Christs own Title, And when the chief Shep. berd shall appear, 1 Pet. 4.5. To be Pontifex Maximus, The greatest High Priest. Whereas Christ alone is called the High Priest of our profession, Heb. 3. 1. and the great High Priest over the House of God, Heb. 4. 14. So his Vicar General upon Earth, whereas the ancient Church attributed this to the Holy Ghoft, calling it Vicariam vim spiritus fancti, he supplies his room and absence. Now Titles including Power, certainly they are not to be usurped without Warrant. Therefore to call the Pope the chief and only Shepherd, and the like; It is to usurp His Authority to whom these things originally belong.

Secondly, He doth usurp the thing implyed by the Titles; the Authority over the Church which is only due to God Incarnate. Supreme Authority may be considered, either as to the

claim, right, property, and preheminence, which belong to it, or to the exercise.

1. The claim and right pretended. He sitteth as God in the Temple of God, that is, by vertue of his office there, claimeth the same power that Christ had, which is fourfold,

1. An unlimited power, over all things, both in Heaven and Earth. This was given to Christ, Matth. 28. 18. and the Pope, as his Vicar challengeth it. But where is the Plea and

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ground of the claim? For one to fet up himfelf as a Vice-God, without Warrant, is Rebellion against Christ, To set himself in his Throne without his leave; surely none is fit to have this Authority, that hath not his power to back and to administer and govern all things for the Churches good, which power God would trust in the hands of no Creature.

An Universal Headship and Supremacy, over all the Churches of Christ. Now this supreme power over all Christians, is the right of God Incarnate, and wholoever challengeth it, fits as God in the Temple of God: and it is very derogatory to the comfort of the faithful, that they should in all things depend upon one man as their supreme Pastor, or else be excluded from the hope of Salvation: Certainly this power as to matter of fact, is impossible to be managed by any man, confidering the vast extent of the World, and the variety of Governments, and different Interests, under which the people of God find shelter, and protection; and the multitude and diversity of those things which are comprized in such a Government; And as to matter of right, it acrilegious. For Christ never infrituted as fuch Universal Vicar and Bishop. It is a dignity too high for any Creature: none is fit to be Universal Head of the Church, but one that is God as well as Man. 3. Abfo3. Absolute Authority, so as to be above controul. When a mortal man should pretend to be so absolute as to give no account of his actions, that it shall not be lawful to be said to him, what dost thou? and all his Decrees must be received without Examination or Complaint, this is such a Soveraignty as belongs to none but God, Job 9. 12. Behold he taketh away, who will hinder him? who can say unto him what dost thou? Now this is in their Canon Law, that the Pope is to be judged by no man, that though he should lead Millions of Souls into Hell, none can say, Domine curita sais?

4. Infallibility and freedom from errour, which is the property of God: he neither is deceived, nor can deceive. Let God be true and every man a Lyar. Now that corrupt and fallible man should arrogate this to himself, such an unerring in judgment, is to usurp divine honour, in matter of right, and in matter of sact. For the Pope to arrogate this, is as great a contradiction to all sense and reason, as if a man sick of the Plague, or any other mortal Disease, should say, that he was immortal, and in that part wherein the Disease

was feated.

2. As to the exercise, there are two acts of supreme Authority.

1. Legislation.

2. Judgment.

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1. Legislation: It is the peculiar and incommunicable property of Christ, to be Lord and Lawgiver to the Church, Ifa. 33. 22. The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Langiver the Lord is our King, he will save us. God alone hath fuch interest in his people, as to prescribe supreme or universal Laws to them. and we are his Subjects, Jam. 4. 12. There is one Langiver who is able to face and to destroy. Now whofoever will make Laws, that shall immediately bind the Conscience, they invade Christs Soveraignty. This is spiritual Tyranny, and the worst fort of Tyranny, to arrogate a power over the subjects of Christ, and their Consciences, as Lord of their Faith. He that taketh upon him to rescind and make void his Institutions and Ordinances, and set his own in their place, and give that reverence and honour to them which only belongeth to the Ordinances of Christ, he is Antichrist, whatever he be.

2. As to Judgment. It is an exercising an Authority no less than Divine. So to take up on him to absolve man from his duty to God, or the penalty which sin hath made his due. The one is done by Dispensations, the other by Indulgences. And therefore whoever by Dispensations, antiquates and dispenses with the Laws of God, himself is thus guilty: As dispensing with marrying the Brothers Wife. Nay, one of the Popes dispensed with one that

that took his own Sister to Wife. I do not alledge this so much for the particular facts, but to thew the power which they challenged to be inherent in themselves. Bellarmine, saith Christ, hath given Peter and his Successors, a power faciendi peccatum non peccatum, to make a sin, to be no sin; and again, If the Pope should err in forbidding Vertues, and commanding Vices: the Church were bound to believe Vices to be good, and Vertues to be evil; which certainly, is to fet man in the place of God. 2. As to Indulgences, as to pretend to give Pardons for fin for fo many years; a thing that God himself never did; to pardon the fin before it was committed; that is, to give a li-cence to fin. So for the highest crimes to absolve men, upon a little attrition, or trouble about the fin, to do all this and more than this, as of right, is to fit in the Church of God as God.

that is meant, not of what he is God, that is meant, not of what he professeth in words, but what he doth in deed. It is not said, that he saith he is God, but and secretary a, he sheweth himself, or sets forth himself as God: the reason of the thing sheweth it. 1. Antichrist gets power by seduction, or the deceiveableness of unrighteousness, therefore does not openly call himself the true and only God. He is represented as a false Prophet, that speaketh lies in Hypocristy. It one would openly and plainly profess himself

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to be God, he might be a frantick Usurper, but could not be a cunning Seducer, and few would be so stupid and senseless as to be led by him. 2. Antichrist whoever he be, is to be a Christian by profession, and to have a high and great charge among the visible Professors of Christianity. He is a secret Adversary, that groweth upon the Apoltafie, or degeneration of the Christian State. Now such pretend observance, and obedience to Christ, and therefore he would not openly declare himself to be God; and he litteth in the Temple and Church of God as before. And it is a mystery; All which imply crafty conveyance, and that he doth not openly affume the Godhead, but flily and fecretly; which doth not mend the matter; for the infinuating, devouring, unfulpected Enemy, is the most perillous and pernicious: as Joab to Amaja, and Judas to Christ. 3. Antichrist is plainly a man; now for a man to disanul all Religion and set up himself directly as God, is improbable. Nero, Nebra chadnezzar, Simon Magus would be adored as Gods, they did not deny other Gods, nor a greater God above them. Therefore it is the arrogance of works is intended: If Antichrift will shew himself as God, certainly he will fweeten his Blasphemy with some Hypocrify, as that he is the Vicar and Vicegerent of God. 4. His shewing himself as God, is either accepting, or doing fuch things, which if they

did rightly belong to him, they would shew that he is God. Two persons I find in Scripture charged for usurping divine honours: The one Herod Agrippa, who was fmitten by an Angel for not giving God the glory when the people cryed, the voice of God and not of man, Acts 12.22. his fault was, accepting what was ascribed by others. The other is the Prince of Tyre, Ezech. 18. 2. Because thy heart is lifted up, and thou bast said, I am God, I sit in the feat of God, in the midst of the seat, yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou fet thy beart as the beart of God. His fault was taking upon him as if he were God, to accept divine honours, to do those things which would make him equalize himself to our Lord Christ Bleffed for ever; fo doth he shew himself that he is God. 1. His accepting Antichrists Disciples, who call him our Lord God the Pope. Supremum numen in Terris, a certain Deity upon Earth. That the Pope hath the fame Consistory with God, and the same Tribunal with Christ: That he is Lord of Heaven and Earth: That from him there are no appeals to be made, no not to God himself. That the Pope may do all that God doth, that he is the Husband of the Church, and the foundation of Faith. In the Council of Lateran, Sef. 4. Alter Dens in Terra; that the words of the Pope in Cathedra, are for certainty of truth, equal to the Scriptures; that he can change

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the form of Sacraments delivered by Christ, or Decree contrary to Scripture. If any do object, that these were the applauses of his Flatterers and claw-backs; it is true they were fo uttered; but those flatteries of the Canonists and Jesuits, do come to be received Doctrines among them: And whereas divers Popes have directed special Commissions for perusal of the works of the learned, with authority to expunge and purge out whatfoever is not Orthodoxal, many better things have come under censure, but these things stand still, as being very pleasing to his Holinesses humility, and so not to be altered. Besides many of these things have been spoken to his face without rebuke. Conc. Latt. Seff. 2. He is called the High Priest and King that is to be adored by all, and most like unto God. Seff.9. It is faid, the Aspect of thy Divine Majesty dazleth our Eyes, and applyeth to him that of the 72. Pfalm, All the Kings of the Earth shall worship him, and all Nations shall serve him. Now to accept and approve of these flatterers, is to shew himself that he is God. 2. By doing fuch things as if he were God, not by the usurpation of the formal name, as arrogating to himself such things as belong to God, his right and property, to take upon himself to be Lord of Consciences, to command what Faith is to be believed, suppressing the true doctrine of Christ, and setting up his own Inventions, dispensing

dispensing with Gods Laws, taking upon him to pardon sins. One Article for which Luther was condemned is this, That it is not in the power of the Church, or Pope, to make new Articles of Faith: another, That the best penitence of all is the new life. Qui facit Deos Divosque Deo major est. The Pope doth Canonize Saints, and his Decrees must be received.

ved as Oracles exc.

The Ule, is to give us a clear discovery where to find Antichrift: every tittle of this in fulfilled in the Bishop of Rome, that we need no longer be in doubt, and fay, Is this he that should come, or shall we look for another? Who is the armener . but he that opposeth himself, to that humble state and frame wherein Christ left the Church, and will be Prince of all Pastors, and swear them to his obedience, and hath made fuch troubles in the World to make himself acknowledged for Head and Chief? Who is he that exalteth himself above all that is called God, and is August in the World? but he that takes upon him to deprive and depose Emperours, Kings and Princes, by his Excommunications, Sufpenfions, Interdictions, and Decrees, discharging Subjects of their Allegiance and Oaths; and giving away their Kingdoms: that doth Crown and Uncrown Emperours with his feet, and tread upon them as one would do upon a Viper? Who is he that fitteth as God, in the Temple

Temple of God, that is, affecteth the honour due to our Lord Jesus Christ? but he that doth thus imperioully aspire [Subesse Romano Pontifici definimus effe de necessitate salutis that. takes upon him a power to make a new Creed. and that we are bound to obey him; that faith he can change the things which God hath commanded in his word, and dispense with them, and fo by his Decrees make the Commandment of God of none effect; and to forgive fins, not only already committed, but to be committed; which God himself never would do; that lords it over Consciences, enflaving the World to his Usurpations: In short, that will be obeyed in those things which God hath forbidden; and take upon himself an Office, which no humane Creature is capable of. Who is he that sheweth himself. that he is God, but he that suffereth himself to be decked with the spoils of Gods own Attributes; to be Optimum Maximum, the best and chiefest, our Lord God the Pope, a visible Deity, and will be adored by all the Potentates of the Earth, with such veneration, as greater could not be given to Christ himself if he were corporally present, and will have all the World to submit to his Decrees, as being infallible: that challengeth a power over Angels, Purgatory, and Hell? These things are as clear as day-light, and ought to be regarded by us, partly that we may bless God, who H 2 hath

hath freed us from this Tyranny, and have a liberty of judging of truth and falsehood, out of his holy and bleffed word: Partly, that we may stand fast in this Liberty. Those that were never Pope-bitten, know not the mifchiefs that attend this spiritual Tyranny, and God grant that we never more know it to our bitter cost. Therefore as Samuel dealt with the Israelites when they would cast off the Theocracy, or Gods Government, under which they had been well and fafely governed, unless they forfeited the protection by their own fin, that they might be like all the Nations round about them, I Sam. 8. 20. Samuel telleth them, what would be the manner of the King, that should reign over them, 1 Sam. 8. 11, 12, 13. And be faid, this shall be the manner of the King that shall reign over you, he will take your Sons, and appoint them for himself, for his Chariots, and to be his Horsemen; and some shall run before his Chariots, and he will appoint him Captains over thousands, and Captains over fifties, and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his Harvest, and to make his instruments of War, and instruments of his Chariots; and he will take your Daughters to be Confectionaries, and to be Cooks, and to be Bakers: And he will take your Fields, and your Vineyards, and your Olive-Yards, even the best of them, and give them to his Servants, &c. So if fuch a wanton humour should possess us, that we must have the

the Religion of the Nations round about us, confider whom you receive spiritually to reign over you. The King of Pride, who opposeth. and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped, &c. one that will not only devour your substance, but lord it over your Consciences, and put out the eye of your reason, that you may the better swallow his damnable errours, pestilent Superstitions and Idolatries, and bold usurpation on the Authority of Christ, or else burn your Bodies with temporal fire, and cast out your name as one to be condemned to that which is eternal. It is easy to open the Flood-gate, but when that is done, it is not so easy to call back the Waters: and when you come to difcern the difference between the bleffed Yoke of Christ, and the Iron Yoke of Antichrist, it will be too late for a remedy to repent of your errour.

The second Use is, to shew us how things should be carried in the true and reformed

Christianity.

I. With such meekness, modesty, and mortification, that our Religion may be known to be established by a Crucified Lord, whose doctrine and example do visibly and eminently hold forth the contempt of the World. The pride and ambition of the Pastors of the Church, hath been the cause of all the evil in it; therefore nothing so unsuitable to the Gos

pel, as a domineering spirit; we that are to preach Heavenly mindedness, and self-denial, should not affect the greatness of the World,

lest our lives contradict our doctrine.

2. How eminent and exemplary we should be in our obedience to Magistrates. For this is to be opposite to the Antichristian Estate. God is very tender of the honour of Civil Powers and Authorities, and will have every foul to be subject to them, Rom. 13.1. Let every foul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God, the powers that be, are ordained of God; and again, 1 Pet. 2. 13. Submit to every ordinance of man for the Lords fake, whether it be to the King as supreme, or to Governours, as them that are sent by him. Great respect and submission is due to them for Gods take, and that we may commend Religion to the profane World, and live down the reproaches of the Gospel. They were branded as wicked men, that were not afraid to speak evil of Dignities, that despise Governments in their own hearts, or weaken the esteem of it in the hearts of others by their speeches, 2 Pet. 2. 10. But chiefly them that walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, and despise Government; presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

3. What a wickedness it is to usurp divine honours. We do so when we take that praise and admiration to our selves, which is only

due to God, Acts 3. 12. And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel why marvel ye at this, or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers, hath glorisied his Son Jesus, &c. and his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong whom ye see and know. Yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this persect soundness in the presence of you all.

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2 Theff. 2. 5, 6, 7.

Remember ye not, that while I was with you, I told you these things.

And now ye know what withholdeth, that he

might be revealed in his time.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, till be be taken out of the way.

TN these words is,

1. A Digression, calling them to remembrance of what he delivered by word of mouth.

2. A Progress, in the further description of Antichrist. He had hitherto been described

1. By his Names and Titles.

2. His nature and properties; now

3. By the time of his appearing; where

take notice of three things.

1. That Antichrist was not then revealed; because there was an Impediment hindering his Revelation.

2. That though he was not then revealed, yet that mystery of iniquity did begin to work, but secretly.

3. That

3. That when that impediment shall be removed, then Antichrist shall be revealed.

First, I begin with his putting them in mind of what he had told them before by word of mouth, Remember ye not that when I was yet with you I told you these things. This sheweth the certainty and usefulness of this Doctrine; for though the event were not to be accomplished in their days, yet he taught them before when present, and now repeateth it again when absent; he preached it in private, and now writeth it for publick good, and laboureth to consirm the truth of it, and fasten it upon their memories.

Observe then, that the Doctrine of Antichrist is a profitable Doctrine, and a point very necessary to be preached, and known.

1. It is a point very necessary, to admonish and warn the faithful, that they be not circumvented with these delusions, and be sound in the opposite state to Christ Jesus, and the interests of his Kingdom. God hath blown his Trumpet, Rev. 18. 5. Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues: God calleth his people out of spiritual Babylon, it is dangerous and unsafe being there; if we would escape Babylons punishments, we must escape her sins, not live in that Communion and Society, where there are such Temptations to Idolatry, and other detestable enormities. It

is disputable, whether the errors of Popery be damnable? or there be any possibility of Salvation in that Religion? some deny all posfibility; others abating from the rigour of that opinion, affert a very great difficulty, 1 Cor. 3. 13. Saved as by fire; if so much Christianity left as to fave them, it is with much ado: But the question is not about our benefit, but our duty; not whether possibly we may be faved, but what is the way the Lord will have us to walk in; and if there were poffibility, or probability of Salvation in the way, in the general, yet there is very little or none for them that live in a known fin, and especially in a fin of such a dangerous nature, as abetting an opposite faction to Christ, such as is that of Antichrift.

It is necessary to fortify and forewarn the people of God against a double Temptation.
 Against Scandal. (2.) Against Persecu-

tions.

1. Against Scandal; it is a dangerous temptation to Atheism, to see Christianity so corrupted, and debauched by a vile submission to serve Worldly ends, and turned into the Pageantry of empty and ridiculous Ceremonies, which beget scorn and contempt of it in the minds of all considering Beholders; and therefore there are more Atheists in Rome and Italy, than in other Countries: supernatural things, disguised with a vain pomp, lose their reverence.

rence, and do not alarm the Conscience, but harden the heart in a settled Atheism, and contempt of Christ: Now it is a mighty stay to the heart, to see that this Degeneration was foreseen and foretold, John 16. 1. These things have I spoken to you, that you should not be offended. Mat. 18. 7. Wo unto the World because of offences, for it must needs be that offences come, but wo to that man by whom the offence com-

th.

2. Against Persecutions; for the man of sin is also a Son of Perdition, a destroyer of the Saints, and maketh havock of the people of God; now it is grievous when Christians suffer by Christians, and we may have many doubtings and milgivings about our cause; But when Antichrift is clearly discovered, we submit the more chearfully to fuffer the hardest things under his Tyranny; for suffering under Antichristian Persecution, is Martyrdom and fuffering for Christ, as much as suffering under Pagan Persecution, Rev. 14. 13. And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, &c. not only the Primitive Martyrs, who were put to death by Heathens, but those that are condemned by Christians, and burnt for Hereticks, those are Martyrs alfo.

3. That we may the better understand true Christianity; avlikely of Sannagha parts.

σα φαίνείαι, opposites illustrate each other; the two opposite States are Christianity, and Antichristianity; the one is a mystery of Godliness, I Tim. 3. 16. the other a mystery of Iniquity; the delign of the mystery of Godlines is to recover men from the Devil, the World, and the Flesh unto God; the other to seduce men from God to the Devil, the World, and the Flesh again; and that by corrupting the former mystery, or the most excellent Institution, that ever the World was acquainted with, for the ennobling and refining mans nature: fo that Christs Religion is turned against himself, to lull mens Consciences asleep, whilst they gratify the lufts of the Eyes, the lufts of the Flesh, or live in Pride of Life; the Devil is gratified by all fin, but especially he is eid wλοχαρήs, as Synesius calleth him, one that delighteth in Idols, as knowing this is the best way to make men brutish, or to live in an oblivion or neglect of God; for an Idol is a teacher of lies, Habak. 2. 18. doth imprint upon the mind carnal and false conceptions of a Deity.

4. To confirm us in the truth of the Christian Faith, when we see the Prophecies of it expresly sulfilled; for that is the Lords direction to know a true Prophet; Deut. 18, 22. If the thing come to pass, and the event doth punctually answer the Prediction; but when a Prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord,

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and the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken. Now the Apostles did not only teach the Church the Doctrine of Christianity, but by a Prophetick Spirit, and Divine Revelation, foretold things to come, and among these the great thing which is to happen, and come to pass before Christs second coming, is Antichrist, or the appearing of the man of sin. Therefore that we may not doubt of what is past, nor suspect what is further to come, it is good to study these Prophecies, and know, they are to be fulfilled in their time, that we may fay, that God that hath kept touch with the World hitherto in all the Predictions of the word, will not fail at last.

Use (1.) To reprove them, that think this is a curious point not to be searched into; why then did God reveal it, and that so often by St Paul, by St John, in so many Prophetical Representations of it? surely it is not curiosity to search into things revealed, but to intrude our selves into things hidden, and which God hath put under a vail of Secresy: It is true, men must know their measure, and not attempt to run before they can go, and venture upon obscure points, before well versed in plain; and it is true in more abstruse points, men must not rashly define; but soberly and modestly to enquire, and compare Predictions with plain Events, this is no way culpable.

2. To reprove those, that are so impatient of giving a little attendance to fuch Doctrines for a while, and think at least matter more profitable should be insisted on; they are perswaded enough already. It is well if it be so 4 but those that stand, should take heed lest they fall; and prefumptuous confidence foonest giveth out, and forfaketh Christ. I would but propound this Argument to them, If it were profitable for them that were to go out of the body long before Antichrist was revealed, to be taught these things again and again, and they be charged to keep these things in remembrance; certainly it is more profitable for others, that live at the time when these things are in being, and the temptation is at the next door, ready to break in upon them; furely it is profitable to discover Antichrist, to reduce those that are gone astray, much more to prevent a revolt, that we may not return to this bondage after a deliverance from it.

Secondly, I come to confider the time of his Appearing, and there to observe three a

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things.

r. That Antichrist was not then revealed, because there was an impediment hindering his Revelation, and now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time, that is, what keeps him back for the present, until the time that God had prefixed.

The Apostle doth not expresly mention what this to ye reyor, or impeachment was, either because he thought it enough to appeal to their memory and knowledge; now ye know what withholdeth: there was no need of repeating that, which was formerly mentioned, they sufficiently knew: or partly, because he would not give the heathen an occasion of raifing a perfecution against the Christians, if they should come to understand, that one professing himself a Christian, should erect a Throne for himself at Rome, and that the Empire should be taken away to make way for him. The Romans were very jealous, on Baorder ovour Cour, because they talkt of these innocent notions, the Kingdom of Christ, and the Kingdom of Heaven, they were apt to accense them lese Majestatis, as if they would with open force and violence attack, or affault the Empire: therefore the Apollle had spoken that, which he thought not fit to write in an Epistle: or lastly, he leaveth it in this obscurity, because all Prophecies were but darkly uttered, that their accomplishment be not hindered; fince it is the will of God, that fuch events shall fall out in the World, and out of Indulgence to his people, he is pleafed to foretel this: It is not meet, that the Prediction should either be too clear, or too dark; if too clear, the event would not follow, nor Gods Government of the World be carried in fuch

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fuch a way, as might fuit with the liberty of mankind; if too dark, the comfort and caution of Gods people would not be fufficiently

provided for.

But what was this Impediment? The Ancients generally determined it to be the Roman Empire; for fo Tertullian, The Empire of Rome, which was to be divided into ten Kingdoms; and reason sheweth it, because the Man of fin could not rife to his Greatness as long as the Roman Empire flood; why? because he that was to exalt himself above all that is called God, and above all that is August, could not bring his designs to pass, as long as the Roman Empire retained its Majefly; but when once that was eclipfed and removed, then he was to be revealed in his time; all things have their time, and so the man of fin. Well then, it was the Roman Empire that stays the manifestation of Antichrist, he being to build his Tyranny on the ruins and wrack thereof; and therefore the Primitive Christians prayed, pro mora finis, that it would please God to deser the fall of this Empire, searing worse things upon the dissolution thereof.

Now this impediment sheweth both the Time and Place of Antichrist; and Time and Place, next to the nature and state of things, are the best circumstances to discover him.

(1.) The Place, Antichrists Seat and Throne

was to be there, where the Seat of the Roman Empire was; and St John telleth us, it was fituated on the City that had feven Hills, Rev. 17. 9. The seven heads are seven Mountains, on which the Woman fitteth; and that is Rome, which is famoully taken notice of to be feated on feven Hills or Mountains. Now Antichrift had not room as long as the feat was filled with the Roman Emperour, for this feat could not be filled with two Imperial Powers at once. especially with such a Tyrannical Power, as that of Antichrist is, exalting it self, not only above Kings and Kingdoms, but wir of Basua, the August State of the Emperours themfelves; there was no exalting this Chair, till there was a removal of the Throne; while the Roman Emperour possessed Rome, the Seat was full, and till it was void, it could not be the Seat of Antichrift.

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(2.) The next circumstance is the Time, when the impediment is taken away, when the Roman Empire is so weakened and temoved from Rome, that this Power may grow up, and that was when the Roman Empire was divided into ten Kingdoms, as Tertullian saith, and is agreeable enough with the Prophecy of St John, Rev. 17. 12. And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten Kings, which have not received their Kingdoms as yet, but receive power as Kings one hour with the Beast; that is, near that time when the Roman Empire

pire was broken and divided, which began

near 600. years after Christs Birth.

II. The next Observation is, that though he was not revealed in the Apostles days, yet the mystery of Iniquity did begin to work, but secretly; for it is said, v. 7. beginning, The mystery of iniquity doth already work. This is given as a reason why it would break out sooner, but it was kept back, there was something a brewing, that would make way for Antichrist; some disposition of the matter, some propensity thereunto, something begun, which would afterwards shew it self more eminently in the great Antichrist.

Here two things must be explained,

1. What is the Mystery of Iniquity?

2. How it began to work in the Apo-

ftles days?

1. What is the mystery of Iniquity? I answer, the design of usurping Christs Kingdom, and his Dignities and Prerogatives over the Church, to countenance the Kingdom of Sin and Darkness, under the mask of Piety and Religion: surely it is something quite contrary to the Gospel, which is the mystery of Godliness, 1 Tim. 3. 16. So that this mystery is such a course and State design, as doth frustrate the true end and purpose of the Gospel, and yet carried on under a pretence of advancing and promoting it. So that to state it we must consider,

1. The mystery of Godlines.

2. The mystery of Ungodlines or Iniquity.

1. The mystery of Godlines is known, by the ends of God by the Gospel; and the way

he took to promote those ends.

1. The end of the Gospel is to recover man out of a carnal ungodly state; into a state of holiness and reconciliation with God; the Terminus à quo; men are carnal, ungodly. (1.) Carnal, when man fell from God, he fell to himself, self interpoled as the next Heir, and that felf was not the Soul, but the Fleib; many wrong their Souls, but no man ever yet hated his own Flesh, and therefore men would rule themselves, and please themselves according to their fleshly appetite and sancy, John 3. 6. That which is born of the flesh, is tleft, and therefore love the Pleatures, Honours, and Profits of the World, as the neceffary provision to fatisfy the defires of the Fleth; And wholoever live thus, they live in a carnal state, as all do, till grace renew them; Rom. 8.5. but this carnal estate doth break forth, and hewray it felf in various ways of finning, Titus 3. 3. Far me our felies also were Sometimes foolist, disobedient, deceived, sentite divers lufts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. All are not Fornicators, Drunkards, Perfecutors, not live in the fame way of finning, but all are

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turned from God to the World, and have a carnal mind, which is emnity to God, Rom. 8. 7. (2.) The next word is ungodly, men thus constituted, live either in a denial of God, Psalm 14. 1. The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God; or a neglect of God, Ephel. 2. 12. Without God in the world; without any acknowledgment or worship of him, Psalm 9. 17. The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God; or if not deprived of all sense of a Deity, they worship false Gods, as those, Acts 14. 12, 13. the men of Lycaonia, that called Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief Speaker, and would have facrificed to them; and the Apostle saith to the Galatians, Gal. 4. 8. When ye knew not God, ye did service to z them, which by nature are no Gods; they wor-Shipped plurality of false Gods: And though the wise men of the Gentiles had some confufed knowledge of the true God, Rom. 1. 19, 20, 21. yet they glorified him not as God, but committed Idolatry by fetting up a false medium of worship, an Idol, which begot a bruitish Conception of God in their mind: so that a false Religion is so far from shewing a remedy of corrupt nature, that it is a great part of the Disease it self. 2. The Terminus ad quem, into a state of Holiness and Reconciliation with God, in whom alone man can be happy. [1.] For Holines and Obedience to God; the great

great design of the Christian Religion, is to bring us back to God again; (1.) As we are carnal, by the denial of fleshly and worldly lusts, Tit. 2. 12. The Grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us; that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, Oc. 1 Pet, 2. 11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from stessly lusts, that war against the soul; and Gal. 5. 24. They that are Christs have crucified the sless, with the affections and lusts. (2.) As we are Ungodly, to bring us to the Knowledge, Love, Worship, and Obedience of the true God, Acts 14. 15. We pray you, that ye should turn from these vanities, to the living God, that hath made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and all things therein; and to seek after the Lord, from whom we have life, breath, and all things, Acts 17. 25, 26, 28. 1 Theff. 1. 9. How ye turned from Idols to serve the living and true God. [2.] Reconciliation with God, that we might have commerce with him, for the present, and live for ever with him hereafter, 2 Cor. 5. 19. God was in Christ, reconciling the World unto bimself, not imputing their Trespasses unto them, and bath committed unto us the word of reconciliation: 1 Pet. 1. 18. Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversations, &c. Heb. 7. 25. He is able to save unto the attermost all that come unto God through him; That whereas before they were alienated

allettated from the life of God, they might live in his love, and in the expectation of being admitted into his bleffed prefence, that they may fee him as he is, and be like him,

1 7ohn. 3. 2.

2. The way it took to obtain these ends, how God may be satisfied, man renewed and changed, God pacified by the Sacrifice, Merit, and Intercellion of Christ Jesus, who came in our flesh and nature, not only to acquaint its with the Will of God, and the unfeen things of another World, but to fuffer an accurred death for our fins: therefore the mystery of Godlinels is chiefly feen in God manifested in our sless, i Tim. 3. 16. and man must be renewed and changed; for our milery theweth what is needful to our remedy and recovery, that we be not only pardoned, but fanctified, if ever we will be laved and glorified: for till men have new and holy hearts, they can never fee God, Heb. 12. 14. Without holiness it is impossible to see God: Mat. 5. 8. Blessed are the pure in beart, for they shall see God; O.c. nor for the present love him and delight in him, nor take him for their chief happiness. As none but Christ can satisfie Justice, and re-concile such a Rebel to God; so none but Christs Spirit can sanctifie and renew our Souls, that we may live in obedience to him, I Cor. 5.11. Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God. This is the Mystery of Godliness.

2. Now for the mystery of ungodlines or iniquity, that is a quite opposite state, but carried on plausibly, and with seeming respect to the mystery which it opposeth; To know it

take these considerations.

I. Where the cantal life is had in request and honour, there certainly is the mystery of Iniquity to be found, whatever pretences be put upon it: Now the carnal life is there had in request and honour. (1.) Where all is referred to Worldly gain and profit, and the whole frame of the Religion tendeth that way: for certainly they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ, whose God is their belly, and who mind earthly things, Phil. 3. 19. Now Pardons, Indulgences, Purgatory, Shrines of " Saints, what do they all tend unto but to make a merchandize of Religion? It was an old byword, Omnia Rome venalia, all things may be bought at Rome, even Heaven, and God himself, &c. And these things are used, not only to open the peoples mouths in Prayer, but their hands in Oblations, and Offerings. The Complexion of their Religion is but a gainful Trade. But the Papal exactions and traffickings have been fo much, and fo loudly inlifted upon, and the evil runneth out into fo many branches, that I shall forbear. (2.) Where temporal greatness is looked upon as the

the main prop of their Religion: The Kings Daughter is glorious within, rich in Gifts and Graces, Pfal. 45. 13. and Pfalm 93. 5. Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever. But the false Church is known by pomp and external splendor. It is easy to discern the true Minifters of Christ from the falle; the true are known by being much in abours, much in afflictions, 2 Cor. 6. 4, 5, 6. In all things approving our selves the Ministers of God, in much patience, afflictions, necessities, distresses, in labours, and watchings, and fastings; by pure-ness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, &c. whereas the falle Ministers are known by the life of pomp and ease; the rule is plain, Because selfdenial is one of the great lessons of Christia-nity, and self-seeking the bane of it; there-fore where men professedly seek the greatness of the World, they serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Bellies.

2. Where men are turned from God to Idols, though it be not the Dæmons of the Gentiles, but Saints, as Mediators of Intercession; there Godliness is destroyed, and the mystery of iniquity set up: For the great drift of the Christian Religion is to bring us to God, through Christ; so the great Whore (which imports a breach of the fundamental Article of the Covenant, Thou shalt have no other Gods but me) it is said, Rev. 17. 5. Upon

ber Forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon, the Mother of Fornications, and abominations upon Earth, debaucheth Nations with her Idolatry, and so seduceth from God to the worship of the Creatures, that the great

intent of the Gospel is lost.

3. Wherever power is usurped in Christs name, and carried on under the pretence of his Authority, to the oppressing of Christs sincere Worshippers, who hate the carnal life, and would by all means keep themselves from Idols, or bowing and worshipping before Images, but excel in unquestionable duties, there is the mystery of Iniquity: for the Beast, that hath a mouth like a Dragon, pusheth with the Horns of a Lamb, Rev. 13. 11. The violence and persecution against the sincere pure worshippers of Christ, is nothing else, but the mystery of Iniquity, the enmity of the carnal seed against the holy Seed, or the Seed of the Serpent, against the Seed of the Woman disguised.

4. Where there is a lessening of the merits of Christ, and his satisfaction, as if it were not sufficient for the expiation of sin, without penal satisfactions of our own; there is the mystery of Iniquity: for by one offering be bath persected for ever them that are santisfied, Heb.

10. 14.

5. Where the new nature is little thought of, and all Religion is made to confift in some external

external Rites and Adorations, or indifferences, there the reducing of man to God is much hindered, and Christianity is adulterated, and the Religion that delignedly countenanceth these things, is but the mystery of Iniquity. To worship God as the Papists do. with Images, Agmis Deis, Crucifixes, Croffings, Spinile, Oyl, Candles, Holy Water, hiffing the Pax, dropping Beads, praying to the Virgin Mary, and other Saints, repeating over the name Jesus sive times in a breath, repeating such and such Sentences so often, praying to God in an unknown Tongue, and faying to him, they know not what; adoring the confectated bread as no bread, but the very flesh of Christ himself; fasting by feasting upon fife instead of stesh; chusing a tutelary Saint, whose name they will invocate; offering Sacrifices for quick and dead, praying for Souls in Purgatory, purchasing Indulgences for their deliverance, carrying the Bones and other Reliques of Saints, going in Pilgrimage to Shrines or Images, or offering before them; with a multitude more of fuch trashy devotions, whereby they greatly dishonour God and obstruct the motions of the Heavenly Life, yea, quite kill it: For instead of the power and life of grace, there are introduced beggarly Rudiments, or ritual observances in indifferent things, and vain traditions by which Christian liberty is restrained, and these pressed with as much severity as unquestionable duties, established by Gods

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Gods known law, for the renewing and reforming Mankind. We are to fland fast in the liberty wherewith Christ bath made us free and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage; Gal. 5. 1. Col. 2. 16. Let no man judge you in meat, or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new Moons, or of a Sabbath day; These things are left to arbitrament, to abitain or use them for edification. That Physician may be born with, who doth only burden the fick with some needless prescriptions, if faithful m other things; but if he should tire out the Patient with Prescriptions, which are not only altogether needless but troublesome, costly and natifeous, and doth extinguish and choke true Religion by thousands of things indifferent, making our bondage worse than the Jews; this is the mystery of Iniquity, to cheat us of the power of Godlines, by the thew of it, burdening of men with unnecessary obfervances.

2. How did this work in the Apostles time? Something there was then which did give an advantage to Antichrist, and laid the foundation of his Kingdom, and did dispose mens minds to an Apostasie from pure Christianity; as (1.) Partly, the Idolizing of Pastors by an excess of Reverence, such as was prejudicial to the Interests of the Gospel, setting them up as heads of Factions, I Cor. 1. 12. Non this I say, that everyone of you saith, I am of Paul,

and I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas: I Cor. 3. 22. Glory not in men, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, &c. This in time bred Tyranny and

Slavery in the Church.

2. The Ambition of the Pastors themselves, and the spirit of contention for rule and precedency, Acts 20. 29, 30. There shall arise among you ravening Wolves, speaking perverse things, to draw Disciples after them; and within a little time began to affect not only a primacy of Order, but of Jurisdiction, and Authority; so that then Antichrist did not exist in his proper person, but in Spirit and Predecessors.

- 3. The errors then set as a corrupted the simplicity of the Gospel; I John 2.18. Now where are many Antichrists, I John 4.3. Every Spirit that confesset not that Jesus Christ is come in the sless, is not of God, and this is the Spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard it should come, and even now already is it in the World: The Spirit of Antichrist is even now in the World; there was a Spirit then working in the Church to introduce this mystery of Iniquity, only the Seat was not empty, but filled by another; the Seeds of this mystery were sown in ambition, avarice, haughtiness of teachers, and their carnal and corrupt Doctrines.
- 4. Some kept their Jewish, others their Gentile Customs, so that Christian Religion

was secretly tainted and mingled with the Seeds of Heathenism and Judaism, which afterwards produced the great Apostafie. Paul in all his Epistles complaineth of the Judaizing Brethren, and seeks to reduce them to the simplicity of the Gospel; In the Corinthians he complaineth of their resort to Idol Temples, their Communion in Idol worship, i Cor. 10. 14. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from Idelatry, and v. 20. But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to Devils, and not to God, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with Devils, and 2 Cor. 6. 16. The worship of Angels, Interdiction of certain meats, then will-worthip, and shews of humility, Col. 2. 16. Let no man judge you in meat and drink, or in respect of an boly day, or of the new Moon, or of the Sabbath days: and v. 18. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of Angels, intruding into those things which be hath not seen, vainly pust up with his slessly mind: and v. 22, 23. Why are ye subject to Ordinances, after the Commandments and Do-Erines of men? which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and negletting of the body. Contempt of Magistracy, 2 Pet. 2, 10. But chiefly them that walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, and despise Government; presumptuous are they, self-willed, and are not afraid to speak evil of Dignities. Thus Thus you see how it began to work, and that the Devil from the beginning had sown these tares.

But was it then in the Apolles time that the mystery of Iniquity did begin to work?

1. We see what need we have to withstand the beginnings, and not give way to a further encroachment on the Church of God: and

2. That the word of God should dwell richly in us, for we have to deal with mystical

Iniquity.

III. Proposition, That when that impediment shall be removed, then Antichrist shall be revealed; only he that now letteth will let, till he be taken out of the way: where observe,

1. It was before, πο κατίχου, that which letteth, now it is ο κατίχου, he that letteth, the Empire, and the Emperour; and mark, a long succession of Empires is called ο κατίχου, why not then a long succession of Popes, the

Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition?

2. He that now letteth will let. Antichrist was but in sieri, and that secretly, and in a mystery; there was desire of rule, some superstituous and false Doctrines, some morture of humane inventions, borrowed both from Jewish and Heathenish Rites; mingled with the worthip of God, some secret ruing of Antichristian Dominion, some playing at lesser.

Game, as Victor took upon him to excommunicate the Eastern Churches for the matter of Easter, but before this obstacle was removed he could not fully appear, and invade the Empire of God and Men, till the Emperour was removed out of that City: while the Heathen Emperours prevailed, there was no place for Church-mens Ambition, their times were times of Persecution, and it is not Persecution, but Peace and Plenty, that preedeth corruption in the Churches.

3. He that is the Emperour, must be taken out of the way, that is, either by the removal of his Person and Throne from the City of Rome, or till the Roman Empire be ruined, as it was in the East by the Turk, in the West by the Incursions of many barbarous Nations, parting it into ten Kingdoms, and then by the Translation of the Empire to Charles the

Great.

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Well then note three things for the time of Antichrift.

1. Before the obstacle was removed he could not appear.

2. When this obstacle was removed pre-

fently he appeared.

a. The degrees of the falling of the one are the degrees of the exaltation and establishment of the other, for Autichrist did grow up upon at.

But they fay, the Roman Empire is not quite

quite fallen, there being a Roman Emperour still. But (1.) the present Empire is but inane nomen, or umbra Imperii; a meer name, or shadow of the Empire. (2.) He that then letted in St Pauls time, was the succession of the Roman Emperours, but this is the German Empire; now if the Roman Empire were the only impediment (the Apolle uleth the word μόνον) therefore as foon as that should be removed, Antichrist would infallibly be revealed. (3.) Though this Empire be not abolished, but removed out of Rome, it is enough to make good Pauls Prophecy, Dixit Apostolus, Imperium esse de medio tollendum, non prorsus delendum: Whitaker. Well then, since the Seat is left void, either the Prophecy is not accomplished at the time, or else the Pope is Antichrist, for the Nations are long since fallen away from the Roman Empire, and the Emperour hath no power nor Authority at Rome

Use. To give a new note to discover and descry the man of sin; certainly Antichrist is already revealed, and we may find him somewhere. I prove it by two Arguments. (1.) The mystery began to work in the Apostles dayes, therefore surely it is compleated by this time, and not reserved to a short space of time a little before Christs coming to Judgment. (2.) This spiritual usurped Power was to break forth upon the fall of the Empire, accordingly

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fo it did, though it grew to its monstrous excess and height by degrees, as to Ecclesiastical Dominion in Boniface the Third, who obtaineth from Phocas the Title of Universal Bishop, whereas Gregory the Great calleth John of Constantinople, the fore-runner of Antichrist, for arrogating the same title as to Kings and Princes.

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SERMON VI.

2 Theff. 2. 8.

And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.

Hese words contain both the rise and ruine of Antichrist; his Revelation, and Destruction.

1. As to his Revelation; there are two things.

1. The Title given to Antichrift, o avo-

uo, the wicked.

2. His appearing in the World, upon the taking away the impediment, *shall be re-* wealed.

2. As to his ruine, three things are obser-

vable.

1. The progress of his destruction, which is here considered as begun, or as consummated.

1. A diminishing of Antichristianism, whom the Lord shall consume. 2. The finishing thereof, in the word, destroy.

2. The

2. The Author, the Lord,

3. The means.

1. Gods word, called his breath, or the

2. The brightness of his coming, namely, when he shall come to judge the World in the Glory of the Father.

Pirst, Of the riling of Antichrist, and then

shall that wicked be revealed.

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1. The Title given to Antichrift, & dvoluto that lawless one, or Son of Belial: it is the property of Antichrift to boaft himself to be above all laws, and to be judged by no power upon earth; for therein he resembleth Aution chus, of whom it is faid, he shall do according to his own will, Dan. 11. 36. Now if this be one of his Characters, it will not be hard to find him out: for who is that infallible Judge. that taketh upon him to decide all Controversies, and judgeth all things, and is judged of no man? and whofoever doth but mutter against his Decrees and delusions; if a private person, he is to be destroyed with Fire and Sword; if a Prince, to be excommunicated, deposed, and his Subjects freed from all Allegiance to him? Who is he, that taketh upon him with Faculties, Licences, and Pardons, to difpence with the Law of God, and to allow open and notorious fins? Who is he that by his own Writers is faid to be folutus omni lege humana freed from all humane law (Hostiensis)

nec ullo jure humano ligari potest, that hath a Paramount Authority to all Laws, that he cannot be bound by them, whether they concern Parricide, the murder of Princes; or Perjury, the obligation of Oaths; or Matrimony, the bond of conjugal Relations? but one expresly saith, that he is supra jus, contra jus, extra jus, above Law, against Law, and without Law; a plain description of the lawless one in the Text: And another, not without some spice of Blasphemy, apud Deum & Papam sufficit pro ratione voluntas, God and the Pope have their Will for a Law. Laftly, Who is he that hath brought into the Church the great impiety of worshipping of God by Images, and the worship of the Saints and Angels, with a worship which is only due to God? which is the great arouia, the lawlessness, which the pure Christian Rule condemneth, and brandeth for such: if there be not fuch a power extant in the Christian World, then I confess we are yet to seek for Antichrist; but if there be, none so wilfully blind as they that cannot see Wood for Trees, and know not where to fix this Character.

2. His Revelation, then shall that wicked be revealed: the word revealed noteth two

things.

1. His appearance in the World.

2. Gods discovery of him.

I. Then he shall be revealed beareth this sense,

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fense, he shall be in the World, and begin to lift up his head as soon as the Roman Emperour and Empire shall be removed; this lawless one shall begin to discover himself, and set up his Kingdom.

Now to understand this, consider this.

1. The most learned Interpreters, both ancient and modern, agree in this, that the impediment was the Roman Empire, as we shewed before, and therefore as the Roman Empire and Emperour was removed out of the way, Antichrist was to be revealed, or the

Predictions of the Scripture are false.

2. Things of great moment cannot be removed, nor established in a minute. The removing of the Roman Empire was not all at once, nor the rifing of the Pontificate, but by # degrees the feat began to be made void, when Constantine began to remove the Imperial Throne to Byzantium; though the Majesty of the Empire continued still at Rome, yet this was a step to the removing of the impediment, for by that means the Popes grew in greatness: but as the Emperours Authority was lessened, so grew that of the Popes, who still incroached to themselves more and more Power, and that to promote the Apoltafie and Derogation from the pure Christian Religion: But as foon as he arose, he came not to the height of his power, either Ecclesiastical or Temporal, nor shall he presently decay. K 3

3. To state the progress of Antichristian Tyranny, is not for a Sermon, it filleth whole Books; but thus in short. About the year 600. or in that Century, their Ecclefialtical Power began to be raised, when the majesty of the Empire was low and weak in Italy, and therefore then was Antichrist advanced a good step: when John of Constantinople had usurped the Title of Universal Bishop, Gregory the great saith, Rex superbie prope adest, the King of Pride is near; & sacerdotum exercitus es preparatur, an Army of Priests is prepared to ferve him as their General, this he, (fidenter dico, I speak confidently:) and within fix years or thereabouts, *Phocas* conferred on Pope *Boniface* the fame Title, to ingratiate himself with the people of that part of the Empire, after the murder of his Lord and Mafter; and then many superstitions were gotten into the Church, as about the year 688. the Pope obtained of the Emperour the Pantheon, or Temple of All-Devils, and Confecrated the same to the Virgin Mary, and All Saints: the temporal Monarchy was long in hatching, but yet the beginning of this mystery soon bewrayed it self. In the beginning of the seventh Century, Constantine the Pope would have his soot kissed, like another Dioclesian; and in defence of Image worthip he openly refifted Phillipicus the Emperour of Greece, and tencouraged Justine and Anastasius,

Tyrants and Murderers, who submitted themfelves to him with Adoration: Rebellion and Idolatry have been ever continued fince. In the year 720. or thereabouts, Gregory the fecond and Third, continued the same Idolatry and Rebellion; And caused all Italy to withdraw their obedience from the Emperour Leo, because he had commanded all Images to be broken and burnt, and for the same cause Excommunicated him, and took to himself the Coctian Alpes as the gift of the Lombards. In the same Century 749. Zachary incourageth and assistent Pipin, to depose his Master Childerick, King of France, and to take upon him that Kingdom. Afterward Adrian took upon him to translate the Empire of the Greeks to the Latines; and ever fince depofed Emperours, and made broils in Kingdoms.

2. Gods discovery of him to the World; that is, when Antichrist was not only extant, but impleaded as such; and this also was by degrees, God raising up in every Age, witneffes against the Tyranny, and Usurpations, that Rome, as the Place, and the Pope, the Person, as considered in his succession, claiming the same power. 500 years before Luther, Peter Bruis begun, and Henry his Scholar succeeded him, and both of them succeeded by the Waldenses and Albigenses, then Wickliff, the Bohemians, who have all pleaded and proved that

the Pope was the very Antichrist; then Savas norella in Italy, preached this boldly. In the fifteenth Century, about 1500. there were fome remainder of the Albigenses about the Alpes, some few Reliques of the Hussites and Calixtines in Bohemia, so few, and so ignorant, that they had neither learning nor ability to oppose this potent Tyranny. Then God raised up Luther, and many other Worthies to affault the Idolatry, Tyranny, and Errors of the Church of Rome; and it is reported in History, that the Angel on the top of the Tower St Angelo, was beaten down by a Thunderbolt; and in the very Day, and in the Church, where Pope Leo the Tenth at Rome had Created 31. Cardinals, a sudden Tempest dashed the Keys out of the hands of the Image of St Peter, shewing God would begin to take away their Power.

Use. If God hath revealed Antichrist, let no man shut his Eyes, but let him be shunned, forfaken, and abhorred; when Christ was to come into the World, it was a day of rumours; some sent to John Baprist, whether he were the Christ, others cryed up false Christs and Impostours, but the people were alarmed with a general expectation: so when Antichrist was to be revealed, it was a day of rumours, just about the time there was a great expectation, some pitched it here, some there, until the Pit was discovered to the Church, and the snare

fnare layed open; and now to run wilfully into these errours, how damnable is it? If Papists cleave to him, let not Protestants fall to him; to continue Papists is dangerous, for they savour Antichrist, and serve Antichrist; but to turn Papists is more dangerous, for this is a downright revolt from Christ to Antichrist: and how God may in mercy dispense with errors, imbibed in our Education, we know not, but to turn our back on the truth, wherein we have been educated and instructed, maketh it more dangerous to our Salvation.

Secondly, We now come to the more com-

fortable part, his ruine; where note,

I. In the general, that the Apostle, as soon as he had showed his rise, he presently fore-telleth his ruine, to support the hearts of the raithful, though he hath yet more things to speak concerning his discovery, v. 9. I cannot

let this pass without an Observation.

Doct. That a spiritual eye can discern the rain of wicked instruments, even in their rise and Reign. Job 5. 3. I have seen the foolish taking root, and presently I cursed his habitation: by the [foolish] is meant the wicked, by their [taking root] their seeking to six and settle themselves in their Worldly prosperity; I [presently] that is, without any great deliberation, which in this matter needeth not, [cursed] their habitation, not as desiring, but

as forefeeing and foretelling. I pronounced them accurled, or to be in a curfed condition; when carnal men feek to root and establish themselves upon Earth to a spiritual eye, their best estate is miserable and detestable; when we see their rise, we may foretel their fall.

Reasons.

1. Their Faith occasions such a reflection, which is the evidence of things not seen, Heb. 11.

1. they look not at things, as at present they seem to short-sighted men, or as they relish to the sless but as they appear, and will be judged of at last, their ruine is as present before them, as their rise; present time is quickly past; but now without Faith this cannot be, 2 Pet. 1.9. He that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, μυωψάζων, but are dazled with present splendor, and so mis-

earry.

2. This Faith is necessary. (1.) Partly to prevent scandal at the prosperity of an ungodly party, who obey not the Gospel, but corrupt and pervert it to their Worldly ends. Davids steps were even gone, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, till he went into the Sanctuary, and understood their end, Pfal. 73. 17. that settled his heart to consider, what end these men were appointed unto, how prosperous soever they seem to be for the present, yet the end must put the difference, there they see the wicked in the height of their prosper

prosperity, as ready to be cut down and withered. (2.) To prevent Apoltalie, they chuse the better part, that chuse the Holiness and Patience of the Saints, 2 Cor. 4. 18. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not feen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal: but things present carry away our hearts, because we have so dim and doubtful a fight of things to come; whereas if we did look upon them as fure and near, they would fortifie us against Temptations, Prov. 3.31, 32. Envy thou not the Oppressor, and chuse none of his wayes; For the fromard is abomination to the Lord, but his secret is with the righteous.

II. More particularly the ruine of Antichrift

is fet forth,

(1.) Partly by the manner of his fall; it is represented both as begun and finished; he shall be consumed, he shall be destroyed; the one noteth a lingring delay, the other an utter Perdition; that he shall be finally rooted out.

First confumed, to consume is to waste and

melt away by little and little.

Dock. Antichrist is not presently to be destroyed, but to waste away by a lingring Consumption; as his rising was by little and little, so is his fall, he loseth his Authority in Christendom by degrees.

Now

Now the Reasons may be these.

1. God hath a Ministry and use for him, and the abetters of his Kingdom, as he hath an use for the Devil himself, therefore permitteth him some limited power, but yet he holdeth him in the Chains of his invincible Providence; so hath he a use for the Devils eldest Son, for Antichrist, and Antichristian Adversaries, which if their power were wholly gone could

not be performed, as

1. To scourge his people for their sins, as their contempt of the Gospel, and wantonness under the several priviledges, which they enjoy by it: God will not want a rod to scourge his disobedient Children, as Isa. 10. 5. he calleth the Assyrian the rod of his Anger, the Instrument that he maketh use off to punish those with whom he is angry; and again, the staff of his Indignation, the Staff is an heavier and forer instrument of correction than a Rod: what the Assyrian was to the Jews, that Antichrist is to professing Christians; God useth him, till he hath sufficiently chastised his Children, and then he will calt this Rod into the Fire; Heathens and Turks are at a distance from us., our miseries will come from Antichristianism, who are nearer at hand to execute the Lords vengeance when we grow wanton.

2. To try his people, for he expects a tryed obedience, what Christianity we will accept

and chuse, that calculated for this World, or that which is calculated for the next. Antichristianism in all the branches of it is a fort of Religion suited to Worldly interests, i John 4. 5. They are of the World, therefore speak they of the World, and the World heareth them: but true Christianity for the Kingdom of Heaven, I Cor. 2. 12. Now we have received, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God. therefore God will try who are the formal and pretended Christians, that serve their own bellies, and the fincere Christians who look to an unfeen World, and are willing to hazard their own interests out of their fidelity to Christ; Therefore when the Saints under the Altar groaned, Rev. 6. 10. How long Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth; the Answer given was, v. II. That they should rest for a season until their fellow servants, and also their brethren, that should be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled: in every Age God will have his Witnesses, who by their Faith and Patience, and not loving their lives to the Death, should promote the Lambs Kingdom, before they receive their Crown; and therefore, though Antichrist be consumed more and more, yet he hath so many abettors of his Kingdom left as may try the Faith and Patience of the Saints.

3. To Cure our Divisions, Nazianzen called the

the Enemies nowoi diannarial, the common reconcilers; the Dog is let loose to make the Sheep flock together; we are hardened in our strifes against each other, till a common danger unite us. It is noted, that when there was a strife between the Herdsmen of Abrahams Cattle, and Lots Cattle, the Canaanite and Perizzite were yet in the Land, Gen. 13.7. God will unite those in common sufferings, whose stubborn humours will not suffer them to meet upon other terms.

4. To keep up a remembrance of his mercies, Plal. 59. 11. Slay them not, lest my people forget, featter them by thy power, and bring them down, O Lord, our shield. God maketh us sensible of the care he hath over us, not by the utter destruction of the Enemies of his People, but by lingring Judgments on them, which affect us more than if they were cut off

fuddenly.

2. Many other reasons may be given, because it serveth the beauty and harmony of his Providence, to cut them off in their time, and by such means, as he hath appointed, and in such a way, as shall most conduce unto his Glory. But I pass them by; we must tarry his leisure, and not question his truth and care over us, and be content, that our Faith and Patience be exercised. If God should bring a studden destruction upon a Power and Tyranny, so supported by the combined interests of

the World, we were not able to bear it. Thorns ferve for a fence to a Garden of Roses; God would not destroy the Canaanites at once, lest the beasts of the field should increase upon them, Deut. 7. 22. nor all abettors of Antichristianism, lest his people should by open to such

evils as they cannot bear.

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1. Observe this Consumption, how it is accomplished, if we find Antichrist risen, discovered, and confumed, why should we be in doubt any longer? The pomp and height was much about 1500. years after Christ, what a Confumption hath happened fince, by the reviving Religion and Learning, the Christian World should with thankfulness take notice of, by the falling of Germany, England, France, and Hungary in a great part, together with Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and other Countries; and by what means hath this been, but by the spirit of his mouth? It is profitable to know Antichrist by his rise and description, but it is comfortable to know him by his difcovery and Confumption, and Gods bleffing fuch unlikely means at the beginning, to fuch a wonderful effect. When Luther first appeared, the Bishop of Strasburgh told him, Abi in colum, mi frater, & dic, miserere nostri. But God hath done great things for us too, when he first turned the captivity of his Churches, we were like unto those that dream.

2. Caution, Antichrift is confumed, but he

is not yet dead; what strength he may recover before his last destruction, God knoweth. Popery, after it was cast out, hath re-entered Bohemia and Austria, and the Emperours Hereditary Countries, and what havock hath been made of the Evangelical Churches, the = Book of Caraffa, the Bishop and Legat of the Pope, called Germania sacra restaurata; sheweth, wherein many notable things concerning their Artifices, to replant Popery, are fet down. As to England, some hope his Consumption is not desperate, and many fear, that Popery may recover again, unless God in mercy prevent it: we know not what is in the Womb of Providence, or how far the Prerogative of Free Grace may interpole in our behalf, whether England shall be made a Theater of merzey once more, or the feat of Idolatry and fuperstition and Blood: But though we do not know what God hath determined, yet we may foon know what England hath deferved; And that is enough to quicken us to watchfulness and Prayer, and expectation, and serious preparation for the day of evil: and by these things, if it cometh to pass, it will do us no barm.

1. When God hath laid in great store of comforts against sufferings, usually there is a time of expence to lay them out again. Christ warned his hearers to make use of the light, because of the darkness coming upon them,

John 12. 35, 36. You never knew the Gospel powerfully preached, but Tryals came; Heb. 10. 32, 34. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in your selves, that you have in heaven a better, and an enduring substance. Castiles are first victualled, then besieged; the mi-

nistry is consolatory mostly.

2. When men can neither bear our vices, nor their proper remedies; Ezek. 24. 13. In thy filthiness is lewdness, because I have purged, thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my sury to rest upon thee: Hosea 7.

1. When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria, for they commit falshod, &c.

3. When there are great differences amongst Gods own people, the end is bitter; we warp in the Sunshine, will not know the way of Peace. Ensebins says before Dioclesians Persecution, φιλονεικίαις ἀνεφλέγουλο, the Church was torn with intestine broils, Pastors against Pastors, and People against People: Ease begets Pride and Wantonness, and that maketh way for Contention.

4. When Prophaneness increaseth, and men do not walk becoming the Gospel, God taketh the Gospel from them. The Apostasie from the power and purity of Religion first made way

for Antichrist, and is most likely to let him in

again.

5. When a people are prepared for such impressions, there is a party formed, partly by opinions, that symbolize with Popery; partly by doting on the pomp and outside of Religion, and neglecting the life and power of it; and partly, when indifferent and Atheistical conceits do dispose their minds no more to one Religion than other, usually then is a Nation sitted for such a change.

. Now what shall we do?

I. Watch and pray; a people well awaked will not change their Religion, the envious man fowed tares, while the fervants flept? Mat. 13. 25. Be instant with God in Prayer, as all good Christians should be, when the Church is in danger: as David, Psal. 59. 13. Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be, that they may know that God rules in Jacob, unto the ends of the earth. Selah. The Consumption is at hand, Luke 21. 36. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass.

2. Reform and repent: Rev. 2. 5. Repent, or I will remove the Candlestick out of his place; our disorders must be bewailed and redressed; there are two stumbling blocks, the Idolatry of the Romish Synagogue, and the evil man-

" ners of the reformed Churches.

3. Be fortified and established,

21. By knowledge; if we have not "διον 511εγμον, a stedfastness of our own, we shall fall, 2 Pet. 3.17. in a time of long Peace, Arms hang up a rusting; and so we are not prepa-

red to refift temptations.

2. By Grace; it is good the heart should be established by Grace, Heb. 13. 9. the new nature will caution men against many Popish errors, 1 John 2. 20. Ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know all things; A Child of God hath something in his bosom, that will not permit him to hearken to Popery; the very life in us is opposite to this dead shew, and mummery of trashy Devotions.

Now I come to the Author, with the means of Consuming. The Lord shall consume him with the Spirit of his month. The Lord, that is the Lord Christ. But what is meant by the Spirit of his mouth, or the breath of his mouth, as some render it? Two things may be meant hereby, either his Providential Word, or his Gospel, accompanied by his

Spirit.

I. His Providential Word, that is, when Christ saith, Let it be done, it shall be done. Is. 11. 4. He shall smite the Earth with the Rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked; those that are called wicked, they are also called the Earth, because they are earthly minded, and have their por-

tion here, and possess much on earth, and have great power, by the advantage of which they oppress his People: Now to execute Judgment upon them, Christ needeth no more than the Rod of his mouth, that powerful Word, whereby he created all things, PC33.6. By the words of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth; Upholdeth all things, Heb. 1. 2. Upholding all things by the word of his Power 3 And brings all things to nothing again, John 18. 6. As soon as he had said to them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground; one word of his powerful Providence is enough. Or fecondly,

2. It is meant of the Efficacy of his Gospel, as it is accompanied by his Spirit, called the Sword of the Spirit, Eph. 6. 17. and it is said to be quick and powerful, Heb. 4. 12. and Rev. 2. 16. Repent, or I will come against thee quickly, and smite thee with the Sword of my mouth; by this word he shall confound the fallflood and cunning practices which are carried on under this mystery of Iniquity, and give it fuch a deadly and incurable wound, that it shall languish before it be utterly de-

stroyed.

Doct. That Antichrists Destruction is by the preaching of the Gospel, and the victorious evidence of Truth. It must needs be so; For his Kingdom and Tyranny is upheld by

Darkness.

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Darkness, which is dispelled by the Light of the Truth: And therefore the Papilts, as all other Hereticks, are lucifuge Scripturarum Dei. cannot endure the Scriptures, deny them to the people, and feek to make them contemptible by all the means they can. Again, his Kingdom is carryed on by Falshood, and his Cheats, and Impostures, and Wickedness, and Usurpation, and false Interpretations and Delusions are discovered by the truth and simplicity of the Gospel, and so is consumed yet more and more Lastly, Popery is a dead form of Religion, and there is not only Truth in the word of God, but Life; we are not only enlightened, but quickened by it, and converted to God, and made partakers of his Spirit; And these will go against their own-experience and inclination, if they should sit down with such empty, beggarly Rudiments.

But here ariseth a Question, shall Antichrist be consumed no other way but by the Spirit of his mouth? We read in the Prophecy, of Wars, by which the Antichristian State is brought to nought. I Answer. The pure and powerful preaching of the Gospel is the principal means, whereby the Spirit of the Lord consumeth Antichrist in the hearts of men; but this is not exclusive of other means, which God in the ways of his Providence may use to weaken his Worldly Interest. But we must distinguish between the means God may use,

and we must use: Simply to put down a Religion by force of arms, is not our way, it is not lawful certainly to invade other Nations upon the pure and sole title of Religion: But if they invade us on that account, no doubt a Prince and People so invaded, may defend themselves. But when a War is commenced on other occasions, it is the most chearful cause to ingage in; when we War against the Abettors of Antichrift, we War against an Enemy whom God will confume. Constantine warred against Licinius, his Colleague, not bécause an Infidel, but because he persecuted the Christians, contrary to their Capitulations. Lewis the XII. caused it to be disputed in a Synod at Tours, Num liceret Pape abig; causa Principi bellum inferre? when it was answered, Non licet : a second Question, Num tali Principi sua desensione fas sit eum invadere? Their Anfwers were, Licet; which he undertook, and caused money to be stamped with this Inscription, Perdam Babylonem.

1. Use. We learn hence, not to be discouraged in our greatest extremities, when all temporal hopes seem to fail, and we have nothing left us, but the word of our Testimony: let us not distrust our spiritual weapons; for they are mighty through God to bring down all the strongs holds of sin and Antichrist, 2Cor. 10. 4, 5. Oh incourage your selves in the Lord, you have the merit of his Humiliation, and

the power of his Exaltation: Merit, what cannot the blood of Christ do to fetch off men from their inveterate prejudices and superstitions? I Pet. 1.18. We are redeemed by the blood of Christ from our vain Conversations .: so for the power of his Exaltation, there is his Spirit; the fuccess of his Spirit on the pouring out of the first Sermon, Acts 2. 41. fetched in 3000. Souls, that had embrued their hands in the blood of their Saviour, and were in no very devout posture at that time: his Word, that is, the Rod of his strength, Psal. 110. 2. which hath a mighty power to convince, transform and convert Souls, Rom. 1. 16. For I am not assamed of the Gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto Salvation. Then there is the power of Providence; all Judgment is put into Christs hands for the advancement of his own Kingdom, John 5.22. if all be in Christs hands, why should you distrust your cause, or the fuccess of it?

2. If you would defend your felves, and wound the Enemy, be much acquainted with the word of God, which is the Sword of the Spirit, Eph. 6. 17 thereby you may ward off every blow of a Temptation. Surely then we should be much acquainted with this word, that it may dwell in us richly, that we may have it ready, this is enough to make wife the simple for all necessary duties and defence.

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3. Pray heartily, that the word of God may have a free course, 2 Thess. 3. 1. and that God would send forth labourers into his Harvest,

Matth. 9. 38.

2. The final destruction of Antichrist, and destroy him by the brightness of his coming. This coming is most likely to be the coming of Christ, so often mentioned, 2 Thess. 1.7,8. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thess. 2. 1, 2, 3. Now we beseech you Brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Others conceive some notable manifestation of his Presence and Power in his Church; but this would ingage us in many dark Prophecies, which I shall not meddle withal (intending only a doctrinal discovery of Antichrist) as how long before his coming, by what means: Sure I am, that at his coming, the Beast and false Prophet shall be slain, and cast into the lake of fire, Rev. 19. 20. but for other things, I have not light enough certainly to define. That the utter ruine of Antichrist is not to be expected till the fecond coming of Christ.

Use. Be not discouraged though Antichrist yet remain after all the endeavours against him.

It is enough that Antichristianism shall be finished, and finally destroyed. And for the time, refer it to God; If it be not till the Day of Judgment, or Christs final Conquest over all his Adversaries, you must be contented to tarry for that, as well as for other things.

SER-

SERMON VII.

2 Theff. 2. 9, 10.

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Sathan, with all Power, and Signs, and lying monders.

And with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be faved.

TE have confidered the Titles of Antichrist, his nature, and properties, the time of his rife, and with it his ruine. Now we are to confider the way and means, how he doth acquire, and keep up this power in the World.

The means are,

(1.) Principal.

(2.) Instrumental.
(1.) Principal, και ἐνέργειαν τε Σαίανα, after the working of Sathan.

(2.) Instrumental, which are also two.

(1.) Pretence of Miracles, with all Power, Signs, and lying wonders.

(2.) Other Cheats and Impostures, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; Their gene-

ral way of dealing being Sophistical and fallacious. Let us a little explain these things.

1. The great Agent in fetting up this Kingdom, after the working of Sathan. It may note the manner, as we render [after] that is in such a way, as Sathan deceived our first Parents; for he was a murderer and a lyar. from the beginning, John 8. 44. I fear, left by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve by his Jubtilty ; so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity, which is in Christ: 2 Cor. 11. 3. So all this mystery of Iniquity shall be carried on after this manner, by deceit, by the tricks of lying men, and the works of deceiving Spirits: Rather it noteth Sathans Agency and Influence, and after, or according to the working of Sathan, is as much, as by the working of Sathan, noting not only his Pattern, but his Influence; so is nata often rendered, and the energy of the Devil, and Influence upon all wickedness is spoken of elsewhere, Eph. 2. 3. The Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience; the Devil hath a great hand over wicked men in the World, his way of dealing with them is most efficacious and powerful, and certainly he is the first Founder and main supporter of the Antichristian State.

2. The Inftrumental means.

1. By pretence of Miracles, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders: These three words signific the same thing, and are often joined,

joined, when true Miracles are spoken of, as 2 Cor. 12. 12. Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in all places, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds, Suvanes, onuala, récala: So Acts 2.22. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, wonders and signs: So Heb. 2. 4. God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles: Rom. 15.19. Through. mighty signs and wonders, through the power of the spirit of God: Powers they are called, because they issue from Power divine and extraordinary: Signs, from their use, because they served to seal and signific the Doctrine to which they are applied: Wonders, from their effect, because they breed astonishment in the minds of the beholders; These were the true Miracles. Now Antichrift, to countenance his false Doctrines and Superstitions, would ape and imitate Christ; and pretendeth to Powers, Signs, and Wonders; as Jannes and Jambres fought to imitate Moses, God permitting it in some degree; so Antichrist seeks to promote his Kingdom the same way which Christ took to promote Evangelical truth. But they are called Powers, and Signs, and lying Wonders; i.e. lying Powers, lying Signs, and lying Wonders; for it agreeth to all the words, though affixed to one of them. why lying wonders? partly because the greatest number of them are meer Fables, notori-

ous Impostures, and Forgeries: partly, because others are Diabolical illusions, things beyond humane, but not Angelical Power; if they are Saunala, Wonders, they are not onuea, as Chrysostome distinguisheth, fit signs to signifie the truth of the Doctrines: partly from the end and scope, for that must also be regarded; God cautioneth his People, that if they gave them a fign and wonder, though it came to pass, if it were to draw them to other Gods, it was to be rejected, Deut. 12. 1, 2, 3. the Spirits must be tryed, whether they be of God, I John 4. I. I Cor. 12. 3. No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: If a wonder be wrought, or pretended to be wrought, to draw us off from Christ, or to promote things clearly forbidden by the word of God, it is a lying wonder as all Antichrist's are; for their end is to confirm the Popes Dominion and falle Doctrine. The fum is this then, That many things are pretended, not really done, Impostures and Forgeries, not Miracles; other things done by Diabolical illufion, as there may be Apparitions, Visions, Spectres; for Sathan will bestir himself to keep up the credit of his Ministers. Lastly, if wecannot otherwise disprove them, if they tend to false Doctrine and worship, they are to be rejected, whatever extraordinary appearance there be in them.

(2.) The other expression concerning the means.

means, is general; with all deceivableness of

unrighteonfnes: which comprizeth,

(1.) Their Sophistical Reasoning from Antiquity, Universality, Unity, Infallibility, without coming to the intrinsick merits of the cause, but condemning the truth rather by

prejudice.

2. Their practical Acts, and feats to beguile Souls, by Fawning or Threatning, or Preferment and Perfecutions: these are the Arts, by which Antichrist shall deceive men into Unrighteousness, that is, to bring this corruption into the Church, and acquire this power to himself.

Now I shall observe some points.

1. Doc. The Devil hath a great hand in setting up Antichrists Kingdom, as he hath a great interest by it; his coming shall be by, or after the working of Sathan. He is the raiser and supporter of that Estate, and he is the great Seducer, Opposer, and Adversary of the Gospel. This will appear, if you consider, First the properties of the Devil, how the Devil is set forth in Scripture, and by what ways he promoteth his own Kingdom.

1. By Ignorance; for the Devils are called, Eph. 6. 12. The Rulers of the Darkness of this World, and his Kingdom is called, the Kingdom of Darkness, Col. 1. 13. the Princelike Authority and Government, which by Gods permission he exerciseth in the World, is over those,

those, who remain in a state of Darkness and Ignorance. Well then, necessarily the Devil must be a great Friend to Popery, where Ignorance not only raigneth, but is commended as the Mother of Devotion: it is into the ignorant part of the World and the Church, that the Devil hath brought in Errors in Doctrine, Formality and Superstition in Worship, and Tyranny and Usurpation in Government.

2. The next thing ascribed to him is Error. so it is said, John 8. 44. He abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a Lyar, and the Father of it. He soon Apostatized from God and his way, and ever fince is an Enemy of all Truth and Goodness; he turned from God, and is a deceiver of others: To our first Parents he called the Truth of God in Question, and was the inventor and beginner of all Errors, that have fince fallen out in the World. Well then, where should his eminent Power and Residence be, but in that Society of professed Christians, where most errors and corruptions in Doctrine and Worfhip have been introduced, where they teach men to pray to, and for the Dead, to adore the Bread, and worship it with divine worfhip, and to worship Images, and to pray to God in a language which they understand not, and maime the Lords Supper, and profeß

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fess they can live perfectly without sin, and meritoriously, and supererogate besides, and lay up a Treasury of merits to redeem Souls from Purgatory, &c. There will be errors and mistakes in Religion, while men are men; but where there is a wilful opposing of evident Truths, and an obstinate resuling of all healing means, and men will abide in their Errors, rather than acknowledge that they have erred; surely they are governed by the influence of his Counsels, who abode not in the Truth, and seeketh what he can to hinder

the prevalency of it in the World.

3. That which is ascribed to Sathan is Idolatry. This was his first and great endeavour in the World, to bring man to worship other Gods, rather than the True, or the True God by an Idol: so he prevailed among the Heathens, they thought their Images did represent their gods, and that their gods dwelt in them, as our Souls do in our Bodies: therefore the Pfalmist saith, All the gods of the Nations, are Idols or Devils, Pf. 96. 5. and the Devil was the great Master and Contriver of this Idolatry; therefore it is faid, Pfal. 106. 37. They sacrificed their Sons and Daughters unto Devils: the service done to Idols, or Images of mans devising, is not done to God, as men pretend who worship them; but to Devils, who are the Devilers, Suggesters, and enticers of men unto all forts of unlawful worship,

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worship, and are in effect served and obeyed by a false Religion, Deuter. 32. 17. They Sacrificed unto Devils, not unto God: 2 Cot. 10. 20. The things which the Gentiles facrificed, they facrificed unto Devils, not unto God: 2 Chron. 11. 15. And he ordained him Priofis for the high places, and for the Devils, and for the Calves which he had made: they otherwise meant it, Jerobvam intended it to the true God, Jehovah; but it was of the Devils Invention. Now if the Devil can get such a party in the Church, as shall not only set up but be mad upon Image-worship, who can more serve his turn, among professing Chrifrians, than they, who have confented to, and continued in idolatrous worship? Surely then Sathan is concerned to befriend their Usurpations, and uphold their Interests; for what will more conduce to the ruine of Christianity, or at least the decay of the power thereof?

4. That which is ascribed to Sathan, is bloody Cruelty, or seeking the destruction of Christs most faithful Servants; for he is called a murderer from the beginning, John 8.44. and Cain is said to be of that wicked one, because he slew his Brother; and wherefore slew he him? because his own works were evil, and his Brothers righteous, I John 3, 12. Enmity to the power of Godline's came from Sathan, and wherever it is encouraged, and notoriously

practifed, they are a party of men governed and influenced by Sathan. Now where shall we find this Character, but in Antichrists Confederacy? In the Prophecy of him, Rev. 12. 15. he caused as many as would not worship the Image of the Beaft to be killed and again, Rev. 17.5. The Woman, whose name was Mystery, was drunk with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs of Jesus: and it hath been eminently fulfilled in the blood shed in Germany, France, and England, and other Nations; and all this to extinguish the light of, and suppress the Reformation. The World is no stranger to their bloody Perfecutions. Oh, how many feeming Christians hath Sathan employed in these works of Cruelty? When once he had feduced the Church to fo many Errors, and corrupted the Doctrine and worthip of Christ, he presently maketh the erroneous party his Instruments of as cruel and bloody Perfecutions as were ever commenced by Infidels and Mahometans; witness their murders upon so many thousands of the Waldenses and Albigenses, whom they not only spoiled, but slaughtered with all manner of hellish Cruelty. Some of their own Bishops complained they could not find Lime and Stone to build Prisons for them, nor defray the charges of their food. The World was even amazed at their unheard of Cruelties, fanoaking and burning thousands of Men, Women.

frien, and Children, in Caves, others at Stakes, and many ways butchered them; proclaiming Croisados, and preaching up the merit of Paradife to fuch bloody Cut-throats, as had a fhind to root them out, driving multitudes to perish in snowy Mountains. What Desolations they wrought in Bobemia, what horrible Maffacres in France, what Fires they kindled in England, and of late, what Cruelties they exercifed in Ireland, Piedmont, &c. Hiltories will tell you, and will tell all Generations to come; what Principles Rome is acted by, and how infariable their thirst is for the blood of upsight righteous men. And after all this tell me. who is he, whole coming is after the working of Sathan? and whether we have cause to be mamoured of Blood, and Fires, and Inquititions?

5. That which is ascribed to Sathan is, that he is the God of this World, 2 Cor. 4.4; and again, the Prince of this World, John 12.31. he playeth the God here, the Riches, Honours, and wealth of this World, are the great Instruments of his Kingdom; and the men of this World, whose portion is in this life, are the proper Subjects of his Kingdom. Of the Saints Christ is their Head; but of the wicked, ungodly, ambitious World, surely Sathan is the Head. There are two Cities (as Austin distinguisheth them) Tempalem is the City of God, and Babylon that Incorporation which belongeth

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longeth to Sathan. Now then, where shall we find him, whose coming is after the working of Sathan, but with him, who with the loss of Christianity exalteth himself, and affecteth an ambitious Tyranny, and domineering over the Christian World, both Princes, Pastors, and People? and to uphold the Tyranny, careth not what havock he maketh of the Church; and the whole frame of their Religion is calculated for secular Honour, Worldly Pomp

and Greatness.

Secondly, By the visible Appearances of the Devil, and where he is most conversant, as in his own Kingdom. Before Christs Kingdom was fet up, the Devil did often visibly appear, but fince he playeth least in fight; when God openly manifested his Presence by appearing to the Fathers in fundry ways and manners, as he did before he spake to us by his Son, Heb. 1. 1, 2. fo did Sathan; Visions, Apparitions, and Oracles, were more frequent; and where Christs spiritual Kingdom prevaileth, the World heareth less of these things; but where it is obstructed, more. Now two instances in Popery. (1.) In their Chiefs: how many Conjurers and Necromancers, (who expresly consulted and contracted with the Devil) from the Year 600. to the Year 1500. the Chair of pestilence yielded, the Histories tell us. (2.) In other decree the Devil had formerly, in the times of Popery, and still where

where it is allowed, incomparably more power among men, to appear to them, and haunt their Houses, and vex them, than now he hath; all that I say is, haunting of Houses, and Apparitions, were much more common.

Uses.

1. A detestation of Popery, whatever is of the Devit should be hated by us, for we are Christs Souldiers, listed in his Warfare in Baptism, Rom. 6.13. Tield your selves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteonsness unto God; but yield not your members as instruments of unrighteonsness unto sin: Rom. 13. 12. Let us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the Armour of Light: Now after our military Oath should we revolt to them, that join with the Devil, and his Angels, to make War against Michael and his Angels?

2. To be more careful to be compleatly armed, For we fight not against sless and blood, but principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in beavenly places, Eph. 6. 11, 12. that is, not only with the one, but the other. The Abettors of Popery are Sathans Auxiliary Forces, whom he stirreth up and employeth. Now the Devils are of great cunning and strength, and by Gods permission exercise great Authority in the World, and the matter about which we contend with them, is the Honour of God and Christ, and our Eternal Salvation. There-

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fore fince the Subtilty, Power and strength of the Enemy is so great, we had need to be the better prepared, and put on the whole Armour of God. That bodily and humane Power, that befriendeth the Kingdom of Sathan, is formidable, and that can only reach the outward man; but Devils and damned Spirits are a more terrible and dangerous party, who secretly blind our minds, and weaken our courage, and strangely and imperceptibly, by our own carnal affections, promote our eternal ruine.

3. It sheweth us the folly of reconciling Babel and Sion; Rome, as it is, and the Reformed Churches, For what concord hath Christ with Belial? 2 Cor. 6. 15, 16. What agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? You can never reconcile God and Sathan, the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent. I speak not of holy endeavours to adjust the Controversies; and reclaim Papills from their Errors; that must be pursued, how fruitless soever the attempt be; but to hope for an agreement, as

things now stand, is impossible.

4. Caution, that the Devil prevail not against us; he once surprized Peter, Mat. 16.
23. Get thee behind me Sathan; he hath prevailed over them, that usurp the highest Chair in the Christian Church. Let him not blind your Eyes in whole or in part; though you be not drawn to Antichristianism, do not live

in a carnal Worldly course; For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil, 1 John 3.8. Every wicked act is Sathans Invention, he stirreth it up, is served by it, delights in it, his Kingdom goeth forward by it. He gaineth by every wicked action. Shew plainly, that you are not of his party, nor ever mean to be. Give way to flethly and worldly lusts, and you are very prone to entertain the groffest Temptations; and by subtle evasions will wriggle and distort your selves out of your duty, as the Papists do.

I come now to the second means.

Dock. That Antichrift doth uphold his Kingdom by a falle show of Signs, and Wonders,

and mighty Deeds. To evidence this,

1. We must inquire what is a Miracle. Miracles are works extraordinary, exceeding the ability of second causes, and done to confirm the Truth. Where we may observe,

1. The general nature of them.

2. Their Author.

3. Their Use.

I. Their general nature and kinds, extraordinary works. Some are either belides nature, when the course of nature is changed, as the standing still of the Sun in Joshuch's Days, the going back of the shadow on Abar his Dist, in Hezekiah's time: Above nature, as the opening of the eyes of a man born blind by Christ,

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John 9. Against nature, when the operation of it is obstructed, as when the three Children remained untouched in the Fiery Furnace, Dan. 3, the fire had not lost its property to burn, for those that cast them in were singed and scorched.

2. The Author, they are works exceeding the ability of second Causes, and therefore are always done by the Power of God, either immediately, or mediately; using some Creature in the performing of them, as the Apostles of Christ. Well then, the primary efficient cause is God, and the manner of working is extraordinary and unusual, exceeding the power

and force of any Creature.

3. The end and use is to confirm some Truth; when they are done for Curiosity, Ostentation, and Delight, they are but jugling tricks, and have not God for their Author; much less when they are pretended to confirm a false Doctrine, or evil end. But real Miracles do oblige by way of sign, declaring Gods interest in, or owning of the truth and Testimony to which they are annexed. For God being the Ruler of the World, good, merciful, just, it is not to be supposed he will cooperate to a lie or cheat, or leave such a stumbling block before his Creatures.

II. That the Miracles wrought by Christ, and his Apostles, did sufficiently prove, that they were Teachers sent from God, for Christ

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often appealeth to his works, John 5. 36. For the works which the Father hath given me to fiwish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, and John 10. 38. Though ye believe not me, that is, his personal verbal Testimony, believe the works, that is, his Miracles, That ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. And when John sent his Disciples to know, whether he were the Messiah or no. (not fo much for his own Confirmation as their fatisfaction Mat. 11. 4. Go, shew him what ye bear and fee, and what was that? The blind receive their fight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf bear, and the dead are raised up, &c. So Nicodemus was convinced by these John 3. 2. We know, that thou art a teacher come from God; for none can do the works that thou dost, except God were with him. To improve these Scriptures, let us confider,

1. The necessity of this Attestation.

2. The fufficiency of it.

t. The necessity there was, that Christs Person and Office should be thus attested: He had the Law of Moses to repeal, which was well known to be Gods own Law; a new Law to promulgate, which is the Law of Faith, or the Gospel, and before this could be received, it was needful for him to manifest his Authority. Besides, he came to redeem, and recover Sinners to God, from the Devil, World, and Flesh; And that he might be more rea-

dily and chearfully entertained, it was necessary to be evidenced, that he came not only by Gods Permission, but Commission; for him bath the Father sealed, John 6. 27, that is, authorized by Miracles. Look as in the first seame from Heaven to consume the Sacrifices, whereas afterwards the High Priests were consecrated and admitted by the ordinary rites, without any such attestation: so there was a greater necessity then, when God brought forth his Son into the World, and did first set up the Gospel State, than there was afterwards, when the course and order of it was settled, and received in the World.

2. The sufficiency of it; the Miracles then wrought were numerous, evident, and undeniable, being done publickly in the sight of all, and therefore the clearest attestation to his Doctrine, that sless and blood could expect; such a stream of holy, necessary Miracles, that were for the most part not acts of pomp, but of succour and relies, and such as could be done by no power less than divine; not like those sudicrous Miracles they talk of in Popery, which look like a cheat rather than a sign from Heaven; These Miracles of Christ could no way be impeached. For either it must be by some truth of God, which the new Revelation did contradict, and delivered by more certain means than those Miracles were;

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but no such Revelation was there, all fairly accorded with those former Revelations of his mind given to the ancient Church : and Christ and his Apostles preached no other things, than what fuited with Mofes and the Prophets, Ads 26. 22. Or elfe by fome greater works, which should contradict the Testimony of these Wonders; as Moses did the Magicians of Baps, Exed, 7. 18. but no fuch thing could be alledged, or was pretended, there-

fore these were fufficient.

2. After the Fauth of Christ was sufficiently confirmed, Miracles ceased; and it was fit they should cease, for God doth nothing unrecessarily: The Christian Doctrine is the fame that it was, and is to be the fame till the end of the World; we have a fure and authentick Record of it, which is the Holy Scripnures. The Truth of Christs Office and Dodrine is fully proved, and cometh trans-mixed to us, by the content of many fucceffi-ons of Ages, in whose experience God hath bleffed it to the converting, comforting, and faving of many a Soul. Look as the Jews, every time the Law was brought forth, were not to expelt the Thundrings and Lightnings, and the voice of the terrible Trumpet, with which it was given at first on Mount Sinui, (one solemn Confirmation ferved for after Ages) they knew it was a Law given by the Ministry of Angels, and fo entertained it with Veneration and

and Respect; so Christianity needed to be once solemnly consirmed, after Ages have the use of the first Miracles: for the Apostle compareth these two things, the giving of the Law and the Gospel, Heb. 1. 2,3,4. For if the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward: How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was consirved to us by them that heard him? we must be contented with Gods owning it now, only in the way of

his Spirit and Providence.

3. That upon the cealing of Miracles, or their growing to be unnecessary, we have the more cause to suspect them, who will revive this pretence, of a power to work Miracles, especially after we are cautioned against these delufions, as here in the Text against the lying wonders of Antichrift, and elsewhere, Mat. 24. 24, For there Shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, in so much, that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very Elect; and again, Rev. 13. 13. He doth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from Heaven upon Earth, in the fight of men. But herein they triumph, when did they ever pretend to do so? Ans. This is not to be taken literally, for the whole Chapter is mystical; none can be so ignorant, that Antichrift shall arise as a Beast out of the Sea, with

with feven Heads and ten Horns; therefore to fetch fire from Heaven, is only an allufion to Elias, that he should pretend to work Miracles, as did Elias, who brought fire from Heaven, 1 Kings 18. 24. and yet in the Letter it was fulfilled in Pope Hildebrand, or Gregory the VII. as one Paulus, who wrote his Life, testifieth, who mentioneth divers wonders of fire wrought by him, and fundry times refembles him to Elias; the meaning is, he shall make his followers as confident of their errors. as if they faw fire come from Heaven to con-firm them. But to return. We being thus cau-tioned and forewarned, Miracles thus performed are deceitful. But you will fay, though Miracles are not necessary to confirm the Faith; yet they are necessary to convince the fallehood of Herefies? Ans. Herefies being a corruption of the Faith once received, are to be confuted by Arguments, not Miracles; by evidence of Doctrine, not wonders; partly, left the people be deceived by magical Impostures, for it requireth some skill to diffinguish true Miracles from those that are deceitful, and done by the power of the Devil: partly, because Verum est Index sui er obliqui, Faith stated and confirmed, sheweth what is Error; fo that to confute Error by Miracles, is nothing but to confirm Truth by Miracles.

4. Wholoever teach falle Doctrine, not consonant to the truth of Scriptures, or that

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Faith of Christ which was confirmed by Miracles, their Wonders are lying wonders, and, how plaufible foever they feem are lying wonders, and not to be believed. Surely Miracles must needs be false and pretended, which are brought to confirm a Doctrine contrary to that which is already confirmed by Miracles; For God is faithful, and cannot deny himself, and therefore he cannot be the Author of Miracles, whereby things contrary to each other may be confirmed; if the Faith once be eftabliffed by other Miracles, we are to believe the latter Miracles to be a meer Imposture; for Christ is not yea, and 'nay, but yea, and Amen, 1 Cor. 1. 19, 20. The Apparition of an Angel is a great Miracle, but if an Angel preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which me have prediched unto you, let him be accurfed, Gal. 1.8. It is a supposition of an impossible Case, necessary to forewarn the people of God against the delusions of the Devil, changing himself into an Angel of Light. Surely God will never contradict himself.

5. The Miracles wrought by Antichrist and his Adherents, are mira, but not miracula, some wonderful things, but no true and proper Miracles, else, as Austin saith, sigmenta mendacium beminum, portenta fallacium spirituum, either the sictions of lying men, or the illusions of deceiving Spirits; many times the matter of sact is not true, at other times the thing-

done is but some illusion of the senses by the Devil; or something taken for a Miracle, which doth not exceed the power of nature; either way it is an Imposture; and indeed the Miracles of the Legends are so false, so ridiculous, so light and trivial, that they expose Christianity to contempt; or else, if there he any thing in it, it giveth suspicious of marioni illusion and converse with the Devil, which among their Votaries and Recluses, is no upushal thing.

6. There are feven points in Popery, which they feek to confirm by Miracles, and which being fenfeless in themselves do most scanda-

lize Protestants.

1. Pilgrimages, they flow the Shrine, and also the Chamber of the House of the Blessed Virgin: how the Virgin at Loretto was transported out of Galiler into Dalmetia, and by Angels in the Air to the remote parts of Italy, and settled there after some removes.

The Story is ridications, and I am ferious, yet this draweth an infinite Company of Pilgrims there, where new Miracles are pretended to

be wrought continually.

2. Prayers for the dead, Bellarmine alledgeth out of Gregory, the miraculous Apparition of Paschal his Ghoft, beforehing St Germanus to pray for him.

3. Purgatory, all their Miracles are framed, especially for the establishing of this point, which

which is of fuch gain to them, as that a dead mans skull spake to Mercarias praying, When thou dost offer Prayer for the dead, then do we feel a little Consolation.

4. The Invocation of Saints Alpius a Grammarian, being for faken of his Phylicians, Stale appeared to him by night, demanding what he ailed? or what he would have? He answered, (to shew a touch of his Art, in Achilles his Speech to his Mother Thetis, in Homer, &c.) Thou knowest, why should I tell thee, that knowest all; whereupon she conveyed a round stone to him, with the touch

of which he was prefently healed.

5. The Adoration of Images, but especially of the Cross, Crucifis, and Image of Christ; Malvenda saith, that at Meliapore in the East Indies, where St Thomas was killed by those barbarous people, digging to lay a foundation they found a square stone, in it a bloody Cross, and an Inscription implying the Saint was slain in the very act of adoring and kissing the Cross, hereupon on went the building, and the Chappel being sinished, in the beginning of the Gospel, in sight of the whole multitude, the Cross did sweat abundantly, the sweat wiped off, drops of blood appeared in the Linnen with which they wiped it, till at length it returned to its own colour.

6. The Adoration of the Host is made good by such a number of Miracles, as fill whole Volumes. Volumes. Bellarmine himself telleth us of an hungry Mare, kept three days without meat, yet when Provender was poured to her, in the presence of the Host, she, forgetting her meat, with bowed head, and bended knees, adored the Sacrament.

7. The Primacy of the Pope hath been the beginning, and is the end of all Popish Legends. A Bishop, being excommunicated by Pope Hildebrand, and inveighing against his Pride, was smitten with a Thunder Clap. Baronius. That while Pope Engenius the Third, was Celebrating the Mass, a beam of the Sun shone upon his head, in which were seen two Doyes, ascending and descending, which an Eastern Legate seeing, submitted instantly to the Primacy;

The Another note of Antichrift; Thele Impostures are not only countenanced, and encouraged in that Church, but made a mark of it, the Power of Miracles. When Antichrist first appeared, ridiculous Miracles of all forts began to be cryed up, and established: Yea, and to the day, thele are pleaded, challenging us for the want of them; what they cannot prove by the Oracles of God, they endeavour to prove by Miracles of Sathan.

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SERMON VIII.

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With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.

of the Antichristian State; we come now to the Subjects, especially the zealous Abettors and Promoters of this Kingdom. They are described, (1.) By the means how they are drawn into this Apostasic and desection: in maior a maior paint with a secondly, By their doom or misery, they are in a state of perdiction, in them that perish. Thirdly, By their sin, which is the cause and reason of this doom: because they received not the slove of the truth that they might be saved.

1. The means, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. That Antichrist shall be a deceiver, and that he deceiveth by lying Miracles, we have seen already, and is foretold, Rev. 13. 14. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which be

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had power to do in the light of the beaff, &c. but the deceived are not altogether guildes, for the fraud would foon be discovered by an holy and pure Soul: His great engine is either the bairs of lust and fin, which work on none but those that have pleasure in unrighteous nels, verse 12. the generality of wicked and carnal Christians, are easily drawn from Gods pure worthip, and true Godlines; or by Worldly means, either by the offers of preferment, riches, dignities, or elle terrors of the fielh. Now none catch at these worldly bairs but whole eyes the God of this World bath

blinded, 2 Cor. A. 4.

Secondly, Their misery, they are faid to be these that perish. That beareth three senses. (1) That they are worthy to perith, because they do not use care and diligence to understand their duty, being blinded by their worldly affections. That is the mildest cone worldly affections. That is the mindent wine we can put upon it, they deserve to perish. No man perisheth but for he own fault, Hel. 13.9. O Ifrael those hast deserved thy self, but in me is thy help. Now they that wall yield so the deceivableness of unrighteoutness, justly perish a though there he deceit in the Case, yet there is unrighteonices in the Cale also, Fraudulent desiring thouse not to corren us, as apparent unrighteousness, or untaithfulness to Christ should warn us. 2. That they are in an actual state of pendition, and unless they

come out of it, are undone for ever. The Apostles when they propounded Christian Doctrine at first, did use this term to distinguish impenitent unbelievers, from those that received the Gospel, as I Cor. 1. 18. The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us that are faved, the power of God. So 2 Cor. 2. 15. We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that perish, and in them that are faved. So he distinguisheth them that receive the Faith, and them that receive it not; penitent believers are those that are saved, but impenitent unbelievers are those that perish; that is, are for the present, during their infi-delity and impenitency; in an actual state of perdition. So 2 Cor. 4. 3. If our Gospel be bid, it is hid to those that are lost: that is, who are for the present in a lost condition. We know not Gods fecret decrees, but those that refuse and oppose the only remedy, to all appearance are lost men. Now this he applyeth to those that yield to Antichrift, thewing them that though they are Christians, yet they have no more benefit by the Gospel than Infidels, they receive not the truth, these revolt from the owning of it upon carnal reasons. And therefore it is foretold, Rev. 14. 9, 10. If any man worship the Beast and his Image, and receive his mark in his forehead, and in his hand, the fame shall drink of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the Cup of his indignation.

nation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy Angels, and the presence of the Lamb. That is, all those that give up themselves as Servants and Souldiers to the Antichristian Estate, and obstinately adhere to, and promote that profession; they shall taste of the Mediators vengeance, which will be very fore and fevere, Luk. 19. 27. Thefe mine Bremies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them forth, and flay them before me. Popery is the high way to damnation. 3. It beareth this fense, that they are appointed to perish who are left to these: defutions. They are such as God hath past by, and not chosen to life: This is to be considered also, for damnable errors take not effect on Gods Elect. Mat. 24. 24. If it were poffible, they hall deceive the very elect. The Elect cannot altogether be feduced and drawn away from Christ, for God taketh them into his protection, and guardeth them against the delusions of false Prophets, that if they be for a time, they shall not always be deceived. So it is faid, Rev. 13. 4. The Locufts shall burt none of those that had the seal of God in their forebeads. The Delusions of Antichrist, have only their full effect on those who are not elected and fealed; upon the Hypocritical profesiors that live in the visible Church. So it is said again, Rev. 13. 8. All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the

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Lambs book of life. And again, Rev. 17. 8. And they that twell on the earth, shall wonder (whose names were not written in the book of life, from The foundation of the world) The Elect are still excepted, which is much for the comfort of the Godly, who belong to Gods Election, that he shall not prevail over them, totally, finally,

God bath cholen you to life.

Thirdly, The reason of this doom, because they received not the love of the truth, that they peright be faved. By the truth is meant the Gol-pel, the chief truth revealed in Gods word, and the only means of Salvation, Eph. 1. In whom also ye trafted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your Satuation. The is the truth most profitable to lost Sinners: receiving is put for entertaining, or believing the word, as Acts 8. 14. When they heard that Samaria bad received the word of God; and Acts 11. 1. That the Gentiles had received the word, and elsewhere. This reception must be with love, Acts 2. 41. As many as received the word gladly, and Ath 17.11. They received the word with readiness of mind. And this affection must produce its effect, so as to convert them unto God. . Now this is denied of them who are seduced by Antichrist, that they never had any true love to the truth, nor minded it in order to their Salvation. Now the business is, whether the clause concerned only the Jews. or can be applied to Christians. The Jews clearly

clearly received not the love of the truth, but did refuse Christ, and his Salvation: And herein the Papists glory of an advantage of turning off this Prophecy from themselves. But the Apostle speaketh not of rejecting the truth, but of not receiving the love of the truth; which is not proper to the Jews, but to false Christians. The Jews Company rejected Christ, and Antichrist was not sent to them for a punishment: but wrath came upon them to the uttermost, to the excision and cutting off their Nation. But here is rendred the reason not of other Judgments, but why men are Captives to Antichrist. Therefore it is not so to be consided.

Doi: 1. The Subjects of Antichrists power

and feduction, are those that perish.

2. The great reason why God sent this Judgment on the Christian World, is, because they received not the love of the truth.

1. Doll. That the subjects of Antichrists power and seduction, are those that perish.

It is a dreadful argument we are upon, yet necessary to be known for our caution, however to be handled warily. (I.) It is certainly more meet for us to have a regard of our own clate, than curiously to enquire what becometh of others. The Apostle waveth judging them that are without, I Cor. 5. 12. I know he meaneth it of the censures of the Church, which are not exercised upon Insides, but

Christians; but so far we may apply it to this case, that we should not rashly judge of the eternal state of other persons, but rather of things wherein our felves are concerned. If the enquiry were only matter of curiofity, furely Christs rebuke would filence it, What is that to thee, Joh. 21. 20. for Christ is ill pleased with curiofity about the state of other men, but it is fit we should know our own duty and danger, and to that end it must be difcuffed. (2.) That there is a great difficulty of the Salvation of Papifts, so living and dying, if not an utter impossibility. Partly because, though it should be supposed that they retain the foundation, yet they build such Hay, and stubble upon it; so many errors in Dodrine, corruptions in Worship, and Tyranny in Government, that if a man could be faved, he is faved but as by fire, I Cor. 3. 13. and no man that hath a care of his Soul, will either embrace Popery, or continue in it; where the way is plainest, there are difficulties enough, and the righteous are scarcely saved, and therefore in a questionable way, none should venture. Worthipping of Angels and Saints departed, and Images, are no light thing. Nor will a ferious Christian chuse that way where the Doctrines of the Gospel are so exceedingly corrupted, and there is fuch a manifest invafion of the Authority of Christ, by challenging an Universal Headthip over his Church, without

without his leave, and this maintained by errors and perfecutions (3.) We must distinguish of those that lived under Popery, rather as Captives under this Tyranny, than voluntary Subjects of this Kingdom of Antichrift: As many holy men did in former times, groating and mourning under the abominations, rather than countenancing and promoting them. To thele God speaketh when he faid, Rev. 18. 4. Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her firs, and that ye receive not of her plagues. They were his people while they were there. These were as those seven thousand in Israel that had not bowed the knee to Baal, Rom. 11. 4. (4) There is a difference to be put between those that ere in the simplicity of their hearts, knowing no better; and those that withstand the light upon carnal reasons, and will not retract their errors, though convinced of the degeneration of Christianity. For simple ignorance is not fo damning as obstinate error. Luke 12. 48. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few fripes, &c. and 1 Tim. 1.13. But I observed mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. The Scriptures many times condemn a way as a way of ruine, but all in that way are not damaed, as John 4. 22. Salvation is of the therefore it followeth not, that all the Samaritans were damned. Some among them though tainted

tainted with the errors of their Country, might have such knowledge of the law of God, and love to him, as might be effectual to Salvation. (5.) We must distinguish between Papifts to living, and to dying; many by Gods grace, may have repentance conferred upon them at death; and though they lived Papills, might die as reformed Christians feeking Salvarion by Christ alone, in the way of true Faith and Repentance, and so the Lord may manifest his compession to them, pardoning the errors of their lives. (6.) We must distinguish Times. God might dispense with many in the times of universal darkness and Captivity, more than he doth afterwards, when the light of the Golpel breaketh forth, and his Trumper is founded to call their forth. Whosoever shall compare John Fierre, and John Calvin will find they were assisted by the same Holy Spirit of God: though the one lived and died a Papift, and the other was an eminent instrument in reforming the Church of God; but an ignorant fear of separation from the Catholick Church, caused many to do as they did; but much more doth it hold good in the times before. Our Fathers if alive would not have condemned us, nor should we condemn them being dead, before they had these advantages which we now enjoy. Illi fi reviviferent, &c. faith Auftin in a like Cafe. (7.) We must distinguish between Popish Errors, some are more Capital, as Adorations of Images, Invocation of Saints, Justification by the merit of Works, Inhibition of the Scriptures, &c. others not so deadly, as when too much reverence is given to Ecclassifical Orders and Constitutions, Penance, Auricular Confession, Fasting. &c. Now though the Case of a real Papis, who is compleat in this missery of Imagine, and refuseth, hateth, persecuteth the truth offered, be desperate, yet the Lord may in tender mercy accept of other devous Souls, who yet live in that way, if they hold the head and the foundations

. Use Let us not think Popery a light thing, which the Lord la peremptorily threatneth. Surely, it is no line mercy that we are freed from it. Therefore we should be thankful for the light we have, and improve it well while we have it, and hold it fall. What hope foever we may have of men living in former fines and foreign Countries, where they knew no better, but after such express warnings, what hope can we have of English Papilts,confidering the time when Rome is not grown better but worle, and what was common opimon, is now made an Article of Paith; and when the truth is taught and to clearly manifelled to that for any by their own voluneary choice, to run into Popery, it is a plain defection from Christ to Antichrists and wilfully to drink that poison which will be the

bane and ruine of your Souls.

2. The great reason why God sent this Judgment upon the Christian World; is to punish those that received not the love of the Truth.

Here I shall enquire, 1. How many ways men-may be faid, not to receive the love of the Truth. 2. How just their punishment is

for fuch a fin:

- I. In stating this fin a I. It is supposed that the truth and doctrine of Christ, is made known to a people, yea cometh among them with great Evidence, Conviction and Authority. For it is not the want of means, but want of love, that it is charged on them; And the plenty of means aggravateth their fault, and maketh their Condemnation the more just. Joh, 2, 19. This is the Condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness more than light. The truth was not for their turns, but was contrary to their lufts, and passions, and prejudices, and these they pre-ferred before the light of the Gospel thining to them.
- 2. That as inevidence of doctrine was not the cause of not receiving the truth; so not bare weakness of understanding: no, it is not weakness but wilfulness which is here intimated, not a defect of their minds, but their hearts, Joh. 8. 15. Because I tell you the truth

ye believe me not. It was not weakness but prejudice hildred their believing. They despised the grace of God, yea hated it, for their
hilts sake. Their lusts he more in opposition
to the truth, than speculative doubts and ernors. Luke 16, 14. And the Pharisees, who were
tacetous, when they heard all these things, they
devided him; the words are blew their Noses at
him. The sensual, and ungodly World
leorneth heavenly doctrine, and pure Christiamity is distasted by false Christians. Err in
mind, err in heart.

3. It is not enough to receive the truth in the light of it, but we must also receive it in the love of it, or it will do us no good. To make the truth operative, (t.) Knowledge is necessary, and also Faith, and then Love. Knowledge, for without knowledge the heart is not good, Prov. 19.2. Nothing can come to the heart but by the mind; the will is "be is at looks," a choice, or define guided by reason, and the Gospel doth not work as a charm, whether it be or be not understood: No, the purport or drift of it must be known, or how can it have any effect upon us? Next to knowledge, to make it work, there must be Faith: when we apprehend a thing, we must judge of it, whether it be true or sale, how else can it make any challenge, or lay claim to our respect? Thess. 2. 13. To received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the

word of God, which worketh effectually in you as it deth in all them that believe. Faith doth inliver our actions about Religion 5 to hear of God, and Christ, and Heaven, doth not fires un-less we believe these things. Well, next to Faith there must be Love, for apprehention and dijudication are acts of the understanding only, but leve belongeth to the will, and we must believe with all the heart, As: 8.37. There may be knowledge without Faith, as an Heathen may understand the Christian Religion, though he believe it not, protes it not And there may be Faith without love, for there is a dead faith, James 2. 20. which refts in cold opinions, without any affection to the truth believed. Love pierceth deeper into the truth, and maketh it pierce deeper into us. As a red hot Iron though never to blunt, will run farther into an inch board, than a cold Tool, though never to tharp. And love maketh it more operative; there is notice per visem, & noticia per gastian. A knowledge by light, and a knowledge by talk: A man may guess at the goodness of Wine by the Colour, but more by the talt, that is a more refreshing apprehension. And Augustine prayech, Fac me Domine gustere per marren quod gusto per cognitionem. Lord make metal sha by love which I tall by knowledge. Surely we are never found in Christianity, till all the light that we receive, be rurned into love. These great

great things are revealed and represented to our Faith, not to pleafe our minds by knowing them, but to quicken our Love. Faith alone is but as light, and Faith with Love is as talt. Now it is more easy to dispute a man. out of his belief, that only feeth, than it is him that eafteth, and knoweth the grace of God in truth. This is the true reason of the ftedfailtness of weak and unlearned Christians, though they have not such diffine conceptions, and realonings as many learned men haves yet their aith is turned into love, and a man is better held by the heart than by the head: And though they cannot dispute for Christ (as one of the Martyrs faid) they can die for Christ. But alas, many receive the wuth in the fight thereof, but few receive it in the love of it, and so lie open to deceit.

4. This love must not be a sleight affection, for that will soon vanish, but we must be rooted and well grounded, and have a good brength. The stony ground had some love to the word, Matth. 13. 20, 21. But he that received the word in stony places, the same is be that heareth the word, and anon with joy receives hit; yet he bath not root in singless, but dureth but a while, for when Tribulation or Persecution riseth, because of the word, by and by he is offended. So also of the Thorny ground. He heareth the word, and the care of this World, and the deceit sames, of riches, cheak the word, and the care of the World, and the deceit sames of riches, cheak the word.

and he becometh unfruitful, ver. 22. Now what are the defects of this love? 1. It is not radicated: A pang of Love, or flath of Zeal: whereas we should be rooted and grounded in love, Eph. 3. 17. Hypocrites had a talt, Heb. 6. 4, 5. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightned, and have tasted of the Heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and bave tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance. Tasted, but did but talt; did escape maquala noque, 2 Pet. 2. 20. yet not having a good Conference, may make Shipwrack of Faith, 1 Tim. 1. 19. 2. It is partial. The Gospel offereth great priviledges, and it is also a pure holy rule of obedience: Acts 2.41. The word of God is made up of Precepts and Promises: God offereth in the Covenant excellent benefits, upon gracious terms and conditions, there must be a consent to the terms as well as an acceptation of the priviledges: The confidence of the priviledges, serveth to wear us from the false happiness, therefore that must be kept up, Heb. 3.6. But Christ as a Son over his own House, whose are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm un-to the end. And the confent to the terms, bind-eth our duty upon us, If a, 56.4. Now as willingly as we yielded at first, we must keep up the same fervour still, Deut. 5. 29. Ob that

there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me and keep all my Commandments always; That it might be well with them and with their Children for over. But whole pure Christianity is not loved by falle Christians; therefore when Religion crofleth their interests, and the bent of their hills, they feek to bring Religion to their hearts, not their hearts to Religion. 3. It is not firong, and in such a prevalent degree, as to controul other affections: it is but a paffion, a pleafure, and a delight they take on for a time, not the effect of folid judgment and resolution: A joy easily controuled and overcome with other delights; therefore Christ requireth a denial of all things, for a close adherence to him and his Doctrine. And hath told us, Matth. 10. 37. He that loveth Father and Mother more than me, is not worthy of me, and Luke 14. 26. Cannot be my Disciple. This is a love to which all other loves must give way, and be subordinate. Many love the truth a little, but love other things more, will be at no cost for it. Solomon giveth advice, Prov. 23. 23. Buy the truth and fell it not. In leffer points we must do nothing against the truth, for though the matter contended for be never fo small, yet sincerity is a great point; but in the greater truths we should purchase the knowledge of them at any rate, and be faithful to Christ what ever it costs us. 4. This flight love may arise from Worldly respects.

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respects. Now in the Text, it is said, they rebe faved. It thould arise upon eternal reasons and confiderations of the other World which only produce abiding affections, Heb. 10. 39. We are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the Soul. In cloting with Christianity, that must be fixed as our scope, not to spare the flesh, but to fave the Soul: and to fave the Soul with the loss of other things, and that will make us true to Christ. But there are many foreign reasons for which men may shew some love to Religion. As first, Policy, as Jehn took up Jonadab into the Charlot with him, 2 Kings 10.15. there is his complement to him: Jonadab was a good man, and this honoured him before the people, to see Jehn and Jonadab so well acquainted. Sometimes refpect to others upon whom we depend: many feem to be good because they dare not displease others that have authority over them, or an interest in them: as Joss was religious all the days of Jehoiada, for he stood in awe of him, 1 Chron. 24. 2. Now fuch forry Religion dependeth on foreign accidents. The life of others or presence of others, and therefore it cannot be durable: whereas in presence or absence we should work out our Salvarion with sear and trembling, Phil. 2. 12. otherwife men only keep within compass for a while,

while, but they have the root of fin within them still. Or it may be novelty; as our bord telleth the Jews: John was a burning and this ning light; and pe were willing to rejoice in his light for a feafont tohi was an eminent man for purenels of Doctrine, and vigour of Zeal, and the more compt fort of Jews!, Pharifees as well as others, admired him for a while but they foon grew weary of him, it was a fit of zeal for the present. Lastly, This love may be to the excellency of gifts, bellowed upon fome Minister or Instrument, whom God rais feth up, or some countenance of great men given to their Ministry, may stir up some love and attendance on their Ministry, and some respect is given for their fakes, when men have no found grace in their hearts. There is a receiving of the word, as the word of man, and a receiving of the word, as the word of Gods as the Apostle intimateth, 1 Thest. 2. 12. The receiving of the word as the word of man. for it worketh only an humane pattion, a delight in the gifts of the Ministry wed; Ezeth. 33: 22. Thou art to them as a lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant vaice. Then there is a receiving it as the word of God, and then we receive at with much affurance and joy in the Holy Cholis 1 Theff. 1. 5. Our Golpel came to gon, not in word; but in power; and much affer educe and joy in the Holy Chote. Now it would that receive the truth upon Gods recommend dation 0. 2

dation and confirmation, we do not love truth as truths our contest is not who hath most wit and parts, but most grace. 5. They do not receive the love of the truth when it doth not produce its folid effects, which is a change of heart and life: And they are not brought by the Gospel to a sincere repentance and conversion to God, or receive the truth so as to live by it: but whilft they have the names of Christians, have the lives and hearts of Atheifts and Infidels. These were those that debauched Christianity, and meritorie and effetive, by their provocations and negligence, brought this degeneracy into the Church and Judgment on the Christian World. Certainly a man hateth that Religion, which he doth profess when he will not live by it: This perfidiousness and breach of Covenant, was that which provoked God to permit these delusions in the Church. The worldly, fenfual, carnal Christians, that hate that life which their Religion calleth for. The Godly Christian, and the Carnal Christian, have the same Bible, the same Creed, the same Baptism, yet they hate one another as if they were of different Religions, and confound the diffinction between the World and the Church, because the World is in the Church And of fentual and godless men, we must speak as Heathers, as if they were without God, they abhor that Religion which they do profess. That is, they ab-

hor not the name, but they abhor those that are faithful to it, and serious in it: who desire to know God in Christ, and defire to love him. and live to him. It was that Christ taxed in the Pharifees, they honoured the dead Saints. and abhorred the living, Matth. 23.29, 20.21. Wo unto you, Scribes, and Pharifees, Hypocrites, because ye build the Tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the Sepulchres of the righteous, and say, if we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them, in the blood of the Prophets. Wherefore je be witnesses unto your selves, that ye are the Children of them which killed the Prophets. Christ hath not worse Enemies in the World, than those that usurp his name, and pretend to be his Officers, and yet eat and drink with the drunken, and bear their fellow Servants, Matth. 24, 49. Chrift will disown such at the day of Judgment, Matth. 7. 22, 23. Many will fay unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out Devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works, and then will I profess unto them I never knew you? Depart from me ye that work iniquity. And fuch do most dishonour him in the World. A righteous, fober, godly life, is the best evidence of our love to the truth.

a. How just this punishment is, (1.) Became God hath ever held this course on the Pagan World, who kept not the natural know-

ledge of God; be gave them up to vile affections, Rom 1.28. The Jews who rejected Christ, Joh. 5. 43. I am come in my Fathers name, and ve receive me not, another will come in his own name, and him will je receive. When Christ cometh meerly for our benefit, the unthankful World will not make him welcome, but they will take worse in his room. So towards Christian stiars; At first men would not receive the Gospel, while it was pure, and in its simplicity, as taught by Christ and his Apostles, and fealed by the blood of the Martyrs, till it was backed by a Worldly Interest, and corrupted into a Worldly delign; and then they had it and all manner of superstitions together, and with these strong deputions there came just damnation. So still the pure Gospel is refused, and God sendeth Populh Seducers as a just judgment; men only prize the light as it may ferve their turn. (2.) The neglect and con-tempt of the truth is so hainous a sin, that it description ? now it is revenged by these errors, as a just judgment on the perverienes and unthankfulness of the World. The duties of the Gospel being to unquestionable, shew their perverse-ness. The priviledges of the Gospel being so ex-cellent their unthankfulness is more intolerable.

t. Use is to show us what cause we have to feir a return of Popery: Alas, where is

this love of the truth? (1.) Some are Gofpel-glutted, loath Manna, a full-fed people must expect a Famine, Amos 8. 2. In differences between God and Baal, Christ and Antichrist, few are valiant for the truth, Jer. 9.3. And they bend their tongue like their bow for lies, but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth: for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, faith the Lord. Contend earneftly. Jude 3. It was needful for me to write unto you, and to exhort you, that you should earneftly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints. Again, (2.) There are many fenfualists, unclean and carnal Gospellers, to these God oweth a Judgment. Usually the Gospel is removed and given to a Nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof. They that use the truth only or principally for their own turns, hate to be reformed, God will reckon with them, Pfal. 50, 16, 17. But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes? or that thou shouldst take my Covenant into thy mouth? feeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind ther.

2. Use shews you indeed, that you love the Gospel. Carentia remedii, is a grievous mifery, or else Christ had not come as a great Blessing. Neglectus remedii, is a grievous sin, to be lazy in a matter of such moment. Those that never set their hearts to obey the truth. Crassa negligentia dolns est. There should be

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constant purpose, endeavour, striving, and not cease striving, till we in some measure prevails rejectio, or contemptio remedii, if we put away the word of God from us, Ads 13. 46. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and faid, it was necessary, that the word of God should first bave been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge your selves unworthy of everlasting life; loe, we turn to the Gentiles. God will be gone, if not from the Land, from thy Soul. This is the most hainous iniquity of all, Heb. 10. 28, 29. He that despised Moses his Law died with-out mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall be be thought worthy, who bath trodden under foot the Son of God, and bath counted the blood of the Covenant wherewith be was sandified an unboly thing, and bath done despight unto the spirit of grace? So Esai's despissing his Birthright, Heb. 12.15. Lest there be any Fornicator, or prophane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat, sold his Birthright, for ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

SERMON IX.

2 Theff. 2. 11, 12.

And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

We have considered the sin of those seduced by Antichrist: now the Judgment: It is twofold. (1.) Delusion in this World, verse 11. (2.) Damnation in the next, verse 12.

1. Delufion in this World; where, take

notice of three things.

1. The Author of it, God shall send it.
2. The degree, or nature of the punishment, strong delusion.
3. The issue of it, that they should believe a lie.

2. Their punishment in the next World, That they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness: where take notice, (1.) Of the terribleness of it, it is no less than everlasting damnation, xerbion for rannershims. 2. The Institute

Justice and Equity of it: They believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

1. I begin with their Judgment in this World. For this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.

Dod. That by Gods just Judgment there is an infatuation upon the Followers and Abettors of Antichrist, that they swallow the groffest errors, to their own destruction.

To clear this I shall speak, 1. To the Author. 2. The degree or kind of the punish-

ment. 3. The effect and iffue.

1. As to the Author, new de aurois o Oeos. Here a difficulty ariseth. For God is nor, and cannot be the Author of sin. He that is essentially good, cannot be the cause of evil. And he that is Ultor peccati, the avenger of sin, cannot be Author peccati, the Author of it: If he should eause man to sin, how will his punishment of it be just? I Answ. As it is a sin, God hath no hand in it, but as it is a punishment of sin, God hath to do in it.

To clear this to you, confider,

1. He that is the supreme Lord and Governour of his Creatures, is also their Judge. For Legislation and Judgment belong to the same Authority. And therefore God is called sometimes our King, and sometimes our Judge. Gen. 18. 25. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Rom. 5. 6. Is God merighteens?

bow then shall be judge the World? That is his

Office and Prerogative.

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2. Gods way of judging for the present, is either external, or internal. As for instance, there are two acts of Judicature, Reward and Punishment. In rewarding, Gods external Government is feen 4 in difpenfing outward Bleffings to his people, as the fruit of their obedience, Micah a. 7. Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly & His promises speak good, and as fulfilled do good: yield protection, mainrenance, and fuch a measure of outward prosperity, as supporteth and maintaineth them, during their fervice. David owned Gods dealing with him in this fort: Pfal. 119.56. This I had because I kept thy Precepts. So as to his internal Government, in giving them peace of Conscience, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. 14.17. For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteonfness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghoft. Pro. 3. 17. Her ways (are) ways of pleasantness, and all her paths (are) peace. These are the internal rewards of obedience. And fo also God often rewardeth grace with grace. As Ifa. 58. 13, 14. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath (from) doing thy pleasure on my boly day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the boly of the Lord honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thy own ways, nor sinding thine own pleasure, nor speaking (thine own) mords: Then shalt then delight thy felf in the Lord; and I will

will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth; and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy Father: for the month of the Lord hath spoken (it.) Plal. 31. 24. Be of good Courage, and be shall strengthen your beart, all je that hope in the Lord. Proficiency in the same grace, is a reward of the feveral acts, and exercise of it. So in punishing sometimes he useth the way of external Government, by the terrible Judgments exercised upon men for the breach of his Law. Rom. 1. 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Heb. 2. 2. Every transgression and disobedience, received a just recompense of re-ward. Sometimes the way of internal Government by terrors of Conscience, or punishing fin committed with fin permitted: both these parts are feen in punishing both the godly and the wicked; as for instance in the godly, in the way of external Government, I Cor. 11. 32. But when we are judged, we are chastned of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the World. In the way of internal Government, the lesser penal withdrawings of the Spirit, which Gods people find in themselves after some fins and neglects of grace, are grievous. But the Judgments upon the Souls of the ungodly, are most dreadful, when the sinner is either terrified or (tupified : terrified by horrors of Conscience, 1 Cor. 15.56. The fling of

death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law; or stupssied by being given up to their own hearts Counsels, Psal. 81. 12. So I gave them up unto their own hearts lusts: and they malked in their own Counsels. So that the Sinner is lest dull, and senseles, and past feeling: Eph. 4.18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: by the first, by horrors of Conscience, they are made to feel Gods displeasure at the courses they walk in; but when that is long despised and men sin on still, then the other and more terrible Judgment cometh. For the giving up a Sinner to his own lusts, and his losing all remorse, is the last and sorest Judgment on this side Hell.

3. As to Gods internal Judgments, the Scripture chiefly infifts upon two parts of this internal dispensation, blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, they usually go together. Blindness of mind is spoken of, John 12.39, 40. Therefore they could not believe, because that Estias said again, he hath blinded their eyes, and hardned their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. All passages are obstructed, whereby the word might enter and work Conversion unto God. It was God laid this punishment of blindness upon them. Hardness of heart, in that samous instance.

instance, Exod. 4. 21. I will barden Pharabhi beart. God doth not make them that see blinds nor them that are soft, hard; but leaveth them to their own prejudice, obstinacy, and unperswadeableness, and that when highly provoked. The former is under our consideration.

To understand Gods concurrence as a Judge, we must not say too much of it, not too little. We must not say too much of it. lest we leave a stain and blemish upon the divine Glory; God infuseth no sin, no blindness nor hardness into the hearts of men, all influences from Heaven are good; he conveyeth no deceit into the minds of men immediately, hor doth he command or perfwade men to oppose the truth. Nor doth he impel or excite their inward propentions to to do. All this belongeth not to God, but either to man or Sathan. Nor must we say too little jas for instance. God is not said to blind or harden by bare prescience or forelight that they will be blinded or hardned; because God forefeeth other things, and yet they are not ascribed unto God: as that men will kill, or steal, or do wrong, and yet God is not said to kill or fleal, as he is faid to blind and harden; and therefore there is a difference between Gods concurrence to this effect, and other fins. Nor only by way of manifoliation as if this were all the fenfe that in the course of his Providence God doth in the iffue declare

how blind and hard they are. That some other thing is meant by it, is feen in the Prayers by which we deprecate this heavy Judgment; As when the Saints pray, Ifa. 63. 17. Lord harden not our hearts from thy fear, or David, Pfal. 119. 19. Lord hide not thy Commandments from me. They mean not thus, Lord thew not to the World how hard and blind I am, but cure my blindness and hardness of heart: keep back this Judgment from me. Again we must not say, that all that God doth, is a bare, naked, and idle permission, as if it happened belides his will and intention. and God had no more to do in it, than a man that frandeth on the shore, and feeth a Shire ready to be drowned, he might have helped it, but permitted it. No, besides all this, there is not a bare permission only, but a permissive intention, and a judicial fentence, which is feconded by an active Providence. Many things concur to the blinding of the mind, and hardning of the heart, all which God wilderh but jultly. The wicked take occations of their own accord, to blind and harden themfelves. Sathan tempteth of his own mance. but all this could not be done with effect and fuccess, without the will of God. There is a supreme power over-ruling, and ordering all that is done in the World.

5. Gods concurrence may be flated by those things. (1.) His withdrawing, or taking away

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the light and direction of his Holy Spirit, Deut. 29. 4. The Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, unto this day. Now when God lets them loofe to their. own hearts Counsels, then they fall into damnable errors. A Greyhound held in by a flip or Collar, runneth violently after the Hare, when it is in fight: as foon as the flip and Collar is taken away, the restraint is gone, and his inbred disposition carryeth him. So men that are greedy of Worldly things, are powerfully drawn into errors, countenanced by the World, when God taketh off the restraint of his Grace, and giveth them up to their own lufts. Now herein God is not to be blamed: for he is Debtor to none, and the grace of his Spirit is forfeited by their not re-ceiving the love of the truth. He is fo far from being bound to give grace, that he feemeth to be bound in Justice to withdraw what is given already, by mens wickedness and ingratitude. Voluntary blindness bringeth penal blindness; And because men will not see, they shall not see. And when they wink hard, and thut their eyes against the light of the Gospel; it is just with God in this manner to fmite them with blindness: And fince they had no love to the truth, they are given up to errors and deceits: And because they despile the Holy Scriptures, they doar on vain Fables: And would not take up a course of

found Godliness and Holiness, he suffereth them to weary themselves with sundry superstitions.

2. Not only by defertion, but by tradition, delivering them up to the power of Sathan, 2 Cor. 4. 4. The God of this world hath blinded their eyes. Sathan as the Executioner of Gods Curfe, worketh upon the corrupt nature of man, and deceiveth them. It is faid, I Chron. 21. 1. Sathan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Ifrael. But it is faid, 2 Sam. 24. 1. And the Anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them, to say, go, number Ifrael and Judah. How shall we reconcile these two places? God gave him over to be tempted by Sathan. By God, as a Judge; by Sathan, as an Executioner. Temptations to fin come immediately from the Devil, but they are governed by God, for holy and righteous ends. So again, 1 King 22. 22. The evil Spirit had leave and Commission, to be a lying Spirit in Ababs Prophets, Go forth and do fo, and thou shalt prevail with him. There is a permissive intention, not an effective : when they grieve his Spirit, God withdraweth and leaveth them to the evil Spirit, who works by their fleshly and worldly lufts, and then they are eafily feduced, who prefer Worldly things before Heavenly.

3. There is an active providence which rai-

feth fuch instruments, and propoundeth such objects, as meeting with a naughty heart, do fore blind it. (1.) For Instruments, 706 22. 16. The deceived and the deceiver are his. Take it in Worldly, or take it in Religious matters, mans deceiving others, or being deceived by others, it is of God; for it is faid, both are his; not only his Creatures, but subject to the government and disposal of providence, how and whom they shall deceive, and how far they shall deceive. So Ezech. 14. 9. If the Prophet be deceived that hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived him. This is a great transaction in the World, a sad judgment not to be cavilled, but trembled at. For mans ingratitude, God raiseth up false Prophets to seduce them that delight in lies, rather than in the truths of God. (2.) For objects, wicked instruments varnish and dress up this cause, with all the art they can, to make it a powerful deceit, and then it is befriended and countenanced by the powers of the World, and so easily prevaileth with them, who are moved either with worldly hopes or fears, and have debauched their Conscience by worldly respects. God saith, Jer. 6. 21. I will lay stumbling blocks before this people. If we will find the fin, God will find the occasion: If Judas hath a mind to buy his Master, he shall not want Chapmen to bargain with him 3 the Priests were consulting to destroy Christ at the

fame time that the Devil put it into his heart, Math. 26.3. being Alarmed by the Miracle of raifing Lazarus. Birds and Filhes are eafily deceived with such baits as they greedily eatch at, so God by his just vengeance ordereth such occurrences and occasions as take with a naughty and carnal heart.

2. The degree or kind of the punishment, every easy wharms, we render it strong delution, or the efficacy of error, that is, such delution as shall have a most efficacious force to deceive them. The prevalency and strength of the de-

husion is feen in two things.

1. The abfurdity of the errors. 2. The obstinacy wherewith they cleave to them.

1. The abfurdity of the errors. I will infrance in three things. Falle Image worthing and Bread worthin, Invocation of Saints, and

fupererogation of works.

1. Adoration of Images. Idolaters are usually represented as sortish, as Psal. 115. 8. They that make them are like unto them (6) is every one that trusteth in them. He had described the senseless of the Idols before; They have mouths, but they speak not: Eyes have they, but they see not: they have ears, but they hear not: Nose have they, but they smell not, or: Now as Idols are senseless so the Idolaters are bruitish. That is, the makers, Worlhopers, and Servers of them, as void of true Wisdom, as the Images are of sense and motion.

motion, Isa. 44. 18. They have not known, nor understood, for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see, and their hearts that they cannot understand. There is a fatal obduration upon them all along there: their senselesses is set forth from ver. 9. to ver. 20. they that worship the work of their own hands, are themselves but stocks and stones, being blinded by the just Judgment of God. If it be said this is meant of the Idols of the Gentiles, not of the Images of God, and Christ, and Virgin Mary, and Saints: But God will not be worshipped by an Idol, and there is no difference between the Images of the Papists, and the Heathens,

but only in the name.

2. The other thing that I will instance in is, the Invocation of Saints, a sottish error, and respect payed to them that are so far out of the reach of our Commerce; and a thing not only without precept, promise, or president in Scripture, but also against Scripture which always directeth to God by one Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scripture saith, Go to God if you lack any thing, and they say, Go to the Saints; if they say not as Authors of Grace, or any Divine Blessing, yet as Intercessor; though that be not true, yet that derogateth from Christ, whose Office it is to intercede with the Father. So that this is to put the Creature in the place of God. But it is not only contrary to Scripture, but the very motion

motion and inclination of the Spirit, when he stirreth us or moveth us to pray, Rom. 8. 15. Te have received the spirit of adoption, whereby me cry, Abba Father. Gal. 4. 6. And because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father; he inclineth us to come to God, and yet this

they will leave.

3. A third Error that I shall instance in is, that man may supererogate, not only merit for himself, but lay in an overplus to encrease the treasure of the Church; when the Scripture telleth us that our best works are imperfect, yea polluted; and our Lord himself hath told us, that when we have done all, say ye we are unprofitable Servants, Luke 17. 10. But what will not men believe, that can believe these things? There are other absurdities as gross as

these, but this sufficeth for a tast.

2. The obstinacy wherewith they cleave to them: Nothing will reclaim them; not Scripture, nor reason, nor evidence of truth, but they still cry the opinion of the Church, and the Faith of their Forefathers, and will invent any paltry shift and distinction; rather recede from any thing that once admit that the Church hath erred. Like the obstinate Jews in Christs time, that denied apparent matter of fact, Joh. 8. 33. We were never in bondage to any man, though they were in Egypt and Babylon, and were now under servitude.

tude, and the power of the Romans. Though we prove they have erred and do err still, the Church cannot err; or rather like the Elder Jews in the Prophet Jeremiahs time, Jer. 44. 16,17,18,19. As for the word that thou haft spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not bearken to thee, but me will certainly do whatfoever goeth out of our own mouth: To burn incense unto the Queen of Heaven, and to pour but drink-afferings to her, as me have done; we, and our Fathers, and our Kings, and our Princes, for then we had plenty of Victuals, and were well, and saw no evil: But since we have left off burning incense to the Queen of Heaven, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the Sword and the Famine. Such fortish oblinacy is there in men, that doat upon their own invented Superfittions and Idolatrous Services. Custom, Antiquity, practice of their Anceftors, the Authority and usage of their great ones, their Rulers, the generality of observance. This is their knot of Arguments, by which they confirm themselves; just as the Papilts plead for their Superstitions at this days and to make the Mess more compleat, they add the plenty and prosperity they enjoyed s what a merry World it was before the new Gospel came in: when they had nothing but Mass and Mattins. And all the Galamities that have faln out, they impute not to their own lins, but to the Golpel. Now when a people are

are thus obstinate, and measure Religion not by reasons of Conscience, but the interests of the Belly, it is a sign that they are under the power of delusion; and error hath more efficacy with such corrupt minds than the truth.

3. The Causes of it shew the efficacy of error. (1.) The finning of their learned, to keep out all instructions; allowing the vulgar only Prayers in a strange tongue, and the Scriptures in no tongue, and teaching them implicitely to believe as the Church believeth. When the Lord permitteth fuch guides to order the affairs of his Church, his great Judgment of occecation and obduration is upon them, Jer. 5. 31. The Prophets prophesie falsely, and the Priests bear rule by their means, and my people love (to have it) fo. (2.) When gain, interest, and ambition move them thereunto. As those Masters in the Acts exclaim against Paul and Silas, when they faw their hope of gain was gone, Acts 16. 19, 20, 21. Thefe men do exceedingly trouble the City. And Demetrius Acts 18. 25. Te know by this craft we have our wealth. This is a tender point to touch interest, and when once it cometh to this, they will proceed in their folly, and defend one falshood with another; for the great Idol of the World is gain, or love of money, 1 Tim. 6. 10. For the love of money, is the root of all evil, which while some covered after, they have erred from the Faith. It were an happiness if fuch PA

fuch kind of Arguments did only prevail with us to embrace a Religion, that might convince others, that it was Religion it felf that we loved: That our interests did not keep others from their duty, and that we could embrace a Religion for the goodness of it, even to our own loss. (3.) Another cause is pride of themfelves, and prejudice against others; lest they should seem to be in an error and wrong, and to learn of a few Novellists: shall they teach them? No, rather they will remain ignorant still. Alas, it is not easy to strike Sail, and fubmit to the teaching of those whom they hate: Therefore men continue those first prejudices they have imbibed, and will rather live and die in their errors, than give God glory by a submission to truth. Such a proud opinion and conceit have they of their own Learning and Knowledge. This cause also conduceth to make the resolution more strong, pre-ingagement in a contrary way. It is dif-graceful to change, men think it is taken notice of as a great wonder, Acts 6.7. That a great Company of the Priests were obedient to the Faith. But such wonders are not wrought every day, they of all men are most pertinacious, but God can of stones raise up Children to Abraham. Now would to God these caules of error were only found in the Antichristian Estate. They are every where, but these cause strong delution. 3. The

3. The issue and effect, that they should believe a lie; two things must be explained.

1. The object. 2. The Act.

1. The object, a lie: that is, either 1. false Doctrines, 1 Tim. 4.2. Speaking lies in Hypocrifie. When palpable errors are taken for truths. A man given over by God to delufion, will fwallow the groffest errors and fictions, and that in matters dangerous and destructive to Salvation. False Doctrines are often called a lie in Scripture, as opposite to the truth. And yet fuch things are received by those from whose parts the World would expect better things. 2. False Miracles, in their Legends; a man would wonder any should have the face to obtrude fuch ridiculous stories, and scandalous to Religion upon the World. 3. False Calumnies against those Instruments whom God employed in the reformation: Popery is a Religion supported by lies, as that Calvin was a Sodomite, and burnt in the shoulder at Noyon, for that crime, and the Popish Dean and Chapter of that place have published his Vindicate. That Luther was an Incarnate Devil begotten by an Incubus. I should weary you to rake in this Dunghil, but I must close it with the general observation, that Antichristians will lie; some among them call them pious frauds, but they are Diabolical Forgeries.

2. The Act is, that they are given up to be-

lieve a lie: This must be applied to their erroneous Doctrines, as common to them all. To their false Miracles and Calumnies, not to the Inventers, but to the seduced, who swallow these things. All that oppose the truth do not go apparently against Conscience, but being given up to the efficacy of error, they may believe that falle Religion wherein they live. Let us open the Term believe. What is it to believe a thing? you may know by the oppolites. Now oppolite to Faith, there is first doubtfulness, when men halt between two opinions, 1 Kings 18.21. If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him. This doubtfulness proceedeth from want of bringing the Case to a Tryal, and thorow Hearing. 2. Conjecture, Acts 26.28. Almost perswaded, Almost thou persmadest me to be a Christian. 3. Opinion, Matth. 13.4. Hath not root in bimself, but dureth for a while, &c. 4. Firm perswasion. They will censure nothing, for if of truth, Joh. 6.69. We believe and are sure, &c. if of error, Acts 26. 9. I verily thought with my felf that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 5. Re-solved adherence, if to the truth, that is called receiving the truth in the love of it: If to error, it is feen in mens obstinacy and zeal suffering in it, I Kings 18. 28. Cutting themselves with Knives and Lances till blood gushed out. Suffering for it. For a man may give his body

to be burned for an error, a man may facrifice a strong body to a stubborn mind: I Car. 13.

3. Though I give my body to be burned, and have not Charity, it prositeth nothing. And perfecuting the contrary, Joh. 16. 2. They shall put you out of the Synagogues, yea the time cometh, that who sever killeth you, will think that be doth God service. To apply this: Warry that live within the Kingdom of Antichrist, some are doubtful, some almost persuaded, some espouse the common prevailing opinions, others adhere to them with much saile real and superstition. These are those who are given up to believe a lie.

Ufer. 1. Information, 1. To thew us the reason why so many learned men are Captivated by Antichrift, and live yet in the Popish Religion, for this is a great scruple to many. The answer is ready, The Lord hath suffered them to be deluded by him whole coming is after the working of Sathan in all power, &c. Rev. 17.2. The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the Wine of her Formicution. It is an intoxication, the errors of that State are plaufibly defended, and supported by Worldly Interests. There is the Witchery of Worldly alterements, and the intoxicating Wine of errors defended and owned within their bounds and places of their education and abode. So that men have formed to lofe their understandings, and not have that advisedness

visedness which well becomes a man: possibly they may have doubts and checks of Conscience, but the name of the Church charmeth them, and Worldly magnificence strangely inveagleth them. They may know that the Religion professed by Protestants, is sincere, holy, and faving, but being allured by Licentiousnels, or intangled by Covetousnels, or puffed up with Pride, are loth to change, or are vanquished and astonished with sear of death and other inconveniencies: or it may be do not use that advised and serious deliberation, which a matter of Salvation requireth. Four causes may be given. 1. Self-Confidence, God will shew the folly of those that depend on the ftrength of their own wit, Pro. 2. 5,6. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and be shall direct thy paths. And therefore will bring to nought the wisdom of the wife, and destroy the understanding of the prudent, when it is lifted up against the Interests of Christs Kingdom, r Cor. 1. 19. 2. Prejudice; The Priests and Scribes could readily tell that Christ was to be born in Betblebem, when Herod sent to confult them, Matth. 2. 4, 5, 6. yet who more obstinate against him, that was born there? They expected a temporal Messias, and therefore could not see what they saw. What was apparent to Children, was a riddle to the Rabbies.

bies. So they expect some open Enemy of the Church to attacque it by power and force, little dreaming of a Bishop, &c. 3. Pride, many of the Tewish Church believed in Christ. but they did not profess him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue. Joh. 11.42, 43. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. They loved not an hated opinion. Many may fear the Pope to be Antichrist, but Pride and Interest will not let them fubmit to a change. 4. The Judgment of God is the great cause that men do not, or will not know Antichrist: God hath not given them eyes to fee, as Christ was not received in Jerusalem, the things of their peace were hid from their Eyes, Luk. 19. 42. He beheld the City and wept over it saying, If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes.

2. It sheweth us, that the prevalency of this wicked one, should be no blemish to providence: for the permission of him is one of Gods dreadful providential dispensations; That it should have such success, it raiseth Atheistical thoughts in weak spirits, yea, it is an offence to the Godly, as it is a prejudice to the Truth; but God hereby will shew us, r. That there are deceits and errors, as well as truth in the World: much of choice, not chance; and lest we should think this an antiquated dispensation.

pensation, to try the professors of the Gospel who lived in the midst of Pagans, it cometh nearer to us. But he that condemneth all Religion on this account, judgeth one man for anothers crime, which is unjust, doth as foolishly as he that thinketh there is no true money, because there are some counterfeit pieces. 2. That God in concomitancy with the Gospel, will discover his dreadful Justice, as well as his wonderful mercy by it, that we may tremble whilft we admire grace. 3. That it is a great evil to be deceivers or active promoters of delusions, and it will not wholly excuse us that we are deceived, Matth. 15. 14. 4. What need all ferious Christians have to pray to God, not to be led into temptation. Alas, what would become of us if left to our felves in an hour of temptation? 5. Let us fear to fleight the grace offered. Among other threatnings God threatneth to smite his people with blindness, Deut. 18. 28. The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: 6. What a ready way to destruction it is, to measure Religion by Worldly Interests. This bred Antichrist, kept him up in the World, and blindeth his feduced Profelytes to this day.

2. Use. Is caution to take heed of spiritual blindness and infatuation, that this Judgment fall not upon us: That God leave us not to our own lusts, hearts, and Counsels, without

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check and restraint. It may in part befal Gods people, what shall we do to avoid it? I. Take heed of finning against light, either by sins of omission, or commission, Jam. 4. 17. To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is lin. They will find it to be fin in the fad effects. 2. Take heed of Hypocrifie in the profession of the truth. God oweth the Hypocrites an ill turn, and feemeth to be ingaged to discover him before the Congregation, Pro. 26. 26. Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole Congregation; and usually it is, by giving him up to some licentious practice, or strong delusion, by which he breaketh the neck of his profession. 2. Take heed of Pride. and carnal Self-fufficiency. God may leave his people to dangerous falls, when they make their bosom their Oracle, and think to carry all by the strength of their own understanding. 2 Chro. 32. 31. God left him to try him that he might know all that was in his heart: It is good to confult with God continually. 4. Take heed of following the rabble, Joh. 4. 20. Om fathers worshipped in this Mountain, and ye say, that in ferufalem is the place where men ought to worship, &c. But learn to see by your own eyes: That you may have fure evidence you are in Gods way, Pro. 24. 13, 14.

SERMON X.

2 Theff. 2. 12.

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2. Heir punishment in the other World.
Where first the terribleness of it,
2. The righteousness and Justice of it.

1. The terriblenes, that they all might be damned. That is, filling up the measure of their obduration, they may at length fall into just condemnation.

2. The Justice and Equity of it, which is

two ways expressed.

1. Negatively, they believed not the truth. That is, received not the Gospel in the simplicity of it, as revealed by Christ and his Apostles, and recorded in the Scriptures, but wilfully, and for their interests sake, gave up themselves to these corruptions.

2. Positively, had pleasure in unrighteoufness: in the 10th verse, it was, They received not the love of the truth. Now when the nicritorious cause is repeated, there is something

more

more added. They had a love to, and delight in, other things, codomocives in adding. Here two things must be explained.

1. What is admia, unrighteousness.

2. What is evoluta, taking pleasure in un-

righteoufnels.

1. What is admia unrighteousness. Righteoulnels is giving every one his due and denying them their due, is unrighteousness. There is a giving man his due, and a giving God his due, Matth. 22. 21. Render unto Cafar, the things which are Casars; and unto God the things that are Gods. Righteousness is often put for giving man his due, Titus 2. 12. That we should live soberly, righteoufly, &c. and giving God hisdue, which is worship and reverence, Psal. 29. 2. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, And again, Ps. 96.8. Give unto the Lord, the glory due to his name, bring an offering and come inte his Courts. Now this unrighteousness here spoken of, is principally meant in the latter sense. False ways of worship are the greatest unrighteousness that can be practifed. For the duty that we owe to God is the most righteous thing in the World. Now by false worship, you withdraw the Glory of God from him, and communicate it to another. Worship is his own proper due, both by the light of nature, and Scripture: and therefore the Gentiles which had the light of nature are faid to detain the truth, in admia, Rom. 1. 18. why? the reason is rendred in the after Verses,

Verses, 23. They changed the glory of God into an Image made like a corruptible man: Ver. 25. They changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the Creature more than the Creator. This was their ἀδικία, their unrighteousness, or injurious dealing with God. So the Antichristians that had the light of Scripture, though under palliated pretences, changed the truth of God into a lie, loved their own errors more than simple and plain Christianity, or the true knowledge of God, and diverted the worship from himself unto an Idol.

2. They had pleasure in unrighteousness, in these things they please themselves, not lapse into it out of simple ignorance and error of mind. And so the Aposte parallels the two great Apostasies, That from the light of nature, and that from the light of the Gospel. Light of nature, Rom. 1.32. Not only do these things, but have pleasure in them that do them. Light of Scripture. Have pleasure in unrighteousness, they are mad upon their I-dols and Images; not only are Idolaters, but delight in Idolatry and Image-worship, Psal. 97.7. That boast themselves of Idols.

Now to observe some things.

1. Errors of Judgment, as well as fine of practice, may bring damnation upon the Souls of men. All fins do in their own nature tend to damnation. Rom. 6. 23. For the wages of fin

is death. And Errors of Judgment are lins, for they are contrary to the rule or law of God; t Joh. 3. 4. Whosever committeth fin, transgresseth also the Law, for sin is the transgression of the Law. Any swerving from the Law is sin; And they are inductive of other lines for if the eye be blind; the whole body is full of darketes; Matth. 6. 23. It perverts our zeal. There is nothing to mischievous, wicked, and cruel, that a man blinded with error, will not attempt against those that differ from him. Toh. 16. 2. They shall put you out of the Synagognes : yea the time cometh, that who seever killeth you. will think that he doth God service. A blind Horse is full of metal, but ever and anon stumbleth. Therefore if a man be not guided by found Judgment; his zealous affections will precipitate him into mischief. As the Jews that perfecuted Christ, and his Apostles, had a zeal of God but not according to knowledge. Rom: 10. 2. So the Popilh Zealots, with what fury have they perfecuted the innocent and fincere fervants of Christ? The Papists would be an: gry if we should not reckon St. Dominick a zealous man; and the poor Albigenies felt of many thoulands, by inhumane Butcheries and Villanies about Tholonfe, &c. The Lord deliver us from the furies of transported brainfick Zealots!

2. Though all errors may bring damnation

upon the Souls of men, yet fome more especially than others, may be said to be damning. As 2 Pet. 2. 1. Some shall bring in damnable Heresees. Now this may be either from the matter

or manner of holding them.

I. From the matter, if destructive of the way of Salvation by Christ. Some are utterly inconfiftent with Salvation and eternal life, as errors in the fundamentals in Religion. As fuppose that a man should reject or refuse Christ, after a fufficient propofal of the Gofpel to him, there is no question but this is damning unbelief, Joh. 3. 19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the World, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. But yet we are not to fay that alone damneth. There are other things necessary to Salvation, contained under that general truth. The Scripture faith, Joh. 17. 3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. There is the fum of what is necessary to Salvation. That God is to be known, loved, obeyed, worthipped and injoyed, and the Lord Jesusto be owned as our Redeemer and Saviour, to bring us home to God, and to procure for us the gifts of pardon and life, and this life to be begun here, and perfected in Heaven. Other things are of moment to clear their necessary truths, but they may be all reabout

about the matter to be believed, is not what divine Revelations are necessary to be believed or rejected when sufficiently proposed, for all points without exception are so; but what are simply and absolutely necessary to eternal life, and these are points of faith, and practice, and obedience. The points of Faith, are a knowledge of God in Christ, and practice that we be regenerated, Joh. 3. 5. Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. And live an holy life, Heb. 12. 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

2. For the manner. 1. When men profess what they believe not, and voluntarily chuse & error for Worldly ends, though it be a less error against the Scripture, and consistent with the main tenour of Salvation; yet if taken up. against Conscience, for by-ends, it is a matterof fad confequence; for this is living in a known fin. Some may be blinded for a time, out of terror and compassion, and their case is fad, till they express solemn repentance; but when there is a reluctation against clear light, and an obstinacy in that reluctation, this man is condemned in himself, Titus 3. 11. Such. a man is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. There cannot be a greater argument of a will unsubdued to God, than to stand out against conviction, out of secular respects.

respects. This is to love darkness more than " light, and argueth such pravity of heart, as is inconfistent with Faith and Salvation. Some ignorant Souls may hold dangerous errors, and which to others would be damnable; yet they may not actually damn them, because they do not rebel against the light; and may be retracted by a general repentance, or feeking of pardon for all their known or un-known fins: Pial 19. 12,13. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous fins : Let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. 2. When they are vented by some Professor of Christianity, to the seducing of others, and rending of the Church, and drawing Disciples after them, this addeth a new guilt to their errors, and maketh them the more damnable, Acts 20.30. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away Disciples after them. These are properly Hereticks, and Ring-leaders of Sects; therefore Heresies are reckoned among the works of the Hell, Gal. 5. 20. Emulation, wrath, firife, feditions, Herefies ; increating their own doom and Judgment; these under a Christian name seduce and lead away the Church from Christ; they pervert the holy ways of God, and draw his people from ferving him in Spirit and Truth. 3. When

3. When though they should not err fundamentally, they so far debauch Christianity, as that God giveth them up to believe a lie, and to take pleasure in unrighteousness, that is, to defend and maintain apparent corruptions of Christian Doctrine and Worship. Of Doctrine, for it is here faid, they believe a lie, and they believe not the truth. Of worship, for it is faid, they take pleasure in unrighteoufness. A party thus given up by God we should shun as we would shun a Plague, or come out of Bedlam; for these men have lost their spiritual wits, and see not that which the? common light of Christianity doth disprove; however they retain the name of Christians, and make a cry of the Church, the Church, as the Jews did of the Temple of the Lord, and retain some truth among them; for such a party is here described.

4. When there is groß negligence, or not taking pains to know better. It is equivalent to reluctation, or standing out against light, Crassa negligentia dolus est; there is a deceit in laziness or affected ignorance, Joh, 3. 20. They will not come to the light, less their deeds should be reproved: 2 Pet. 3. 5. They are willingly ignorant. Those that please themselves in the ignorance of any truth, err not only in their minds, but their hearts. It is the duty of Gods people to understand what is his will, Epb. 5. 7. Be not unwise but understanding what the will of

the Lord is. And it is their practice, Rom. 12, 2. That ye may prove, what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God: Psal. 1. 2. His delight is in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate day and night. We should be searching still. But when men will not know what they have a mind to hate, it argueth a secret sore, and suspicion of the truth, and are loth to follow it too close, lest it cross their suspices.

3. That the way and errors of Popery are damnable, and it is very unsafe living in that Society and Combination. I prove it. 1. Because they live in wilful disobedience to God: They violate the manifest Commandments of God, while they hold it lawful to worship Pictures and Images, to make Pictures of the Trinity, to invocate Saints and Angels, to deny Lay-men the Cupan the Sacrament, to adore the Sacrament, to prohibit certain Orders of Men and Women to marry, to Celebrate the publick fervice in a language which ordinarily men and women that affift understand not: In all these things they offer apparent violence to Gods Precepts. And that their whole worthip is polluted with a gross Superstition; as for instance, to worship Images is carrefly against Gods word, Pfal. 97. 7. Confounded be all they that worship graven Images, that boast themselves of Idols. Worship him all ye Gods. The Scripture you fee denounceth confusion

confusion to all Worshippers of Images, and they are reckoned as Enemies of Christs Kingdom: for it is applied to Christ, Heb. r. 6. And let all the Angels of God worship him. That would fet up the worship and service of them in his Church, in the exercise of their Religion, especially those who glory in them, and boaft of them, and fet them forth as the glory of their way and worship. No, he disdaineth all this relative worship, at or before Images, which men would give unto him, and sheweth, that all the Powers of this World, and the other, Angels and Potentates should immediately worship Christ. For the second point, picturing the Trinity. God hath not only forbidden it, but argued against it. Deut. 4. 15, 16. Take therefore good heed unto your selves, for ye saw no similitude, when the Lord spake to you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire: left ye corrupt your selves, and make you a graven Image, the similitude of any thing, Male or Female. See how cautelous God is, to prevent this abuse, and yet how boldly men practife it. For the third instance, the Invocation of Saints and Angels. Our Lord hath taught us how to repel that temptation, Matth. 4. 10. It is written, thou Stalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. That religious service and worship is due only to God: no Creature can claim it without Sucriledge, nor can we give it to them without Idolatry.

Idolatry. And God being so jealous of his bonour, every Christian should be careful that he doth not divert it from him. They have many distinctions to excuse themselves to the World, but I doubt how they will excuse themselves to God. For the fourth particular, adoring the Sacrament, I shall speak to again anon, that is a mean, not an object of worthip. The Fifth, prohibiting certain Orders of men and women to marry, which the Apoftle calleth Doctrines of Devils, 1 Tim. 4. 1, 2. In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving beed to seducing spirits, and Dodrives of Devils: speaking lies in hypocrisie, having their Conscience seared with a hot Iron, forbidding to marry, &c. For the Sixth, Celebrating publick Service in an unknown Tongue, it is contrary to the Apostles reasoning, I Cor. 14. 15, 16, 17. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the nuderstanding also: else when thou shall bleft with the spirit, how shall be that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen, at thy giving of thanks, feeing he understandeth not what then sayoft ; for then verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. For the Seweath, Communion in one kind; this is against Christs express Institution, Matth. 26, 26, 27. Te us e

Jesus took bread, and plessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the Disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my Body: And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, faying, Drink ye all of it. The Apostle supposeth every one that can examine himfelf, I Con. 11. 18. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup. Now for this usurping Synagogue to come as they do, with a non obstante, to the Statutes of God, Who can join with them in these corruptions and usurpations, without peril of Salvation? Secondly, That the way of Popery is damnable because they deprive the people of the means of Salvation, contrary to the express Injunctions from God, Joh. 3. 39. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. Col. 3. 16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns. The Saints are commended, Acts 17.11. In that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were fo : and 2 Tim. 3. 15. That he knew the Scriptures which are able to make wife unto faloution, through faith which is in Christ Jefus. This is the feed of Life, food of Souls, rule of Faith and Manners, our strength against temptation, 1 Joh. 2. 14. Thave written unto you young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God diNew to deprive the Lords people of the Bread of Life, and Word of Life, what is it

but to leave them to perish?

The great charge is, they have pleasure in unrighteousness, that is, delight in Idolatry; and corrupt or false worship, which is the greatest unrighteousness man can be guilty of To evidence this; let us enquire; 1. What is Idolatry. 2. Prove how notoriously they

are guilty of it.

a Creature with Divine Worship, and who-soever giveth Divine Worship to a Creature, committeth Idolatry. This Proposition is evident in the Scripture, as when the Israelites worshipped the Calf, litteral or metaphorical Idolatry, they are called Idolaters, I Cor. 10.

7. Neither be ye Idolaters as were some of them, as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. And the covetous, that giveth that delight and trust to his wealth, which is only due to God, is called an Idolater, Epb. 5.5. Nor covetous man who is an Idolater; and in many other places.

Secondly, Now that the Papilts are guilty

of this, I prove.

they have more variety of objects of worthing, than any Society of men that ever lived in the World. I. Angels are Creatures, and that

they

they worship Angels themselves consess. They Consecrate Churches unto them, offer solemn "Prayers unto them, and own the adoring them, thought an Angel forbiddeth this Adoration, Rev. 19. 10. And he said unto me, See, thou do it not, I am thy fellow Servant, Sec. and St. Paul telleth us, that they that worship Angels, do not hold the head, Col. 1. 18, 19. So that Angel-worship proveth to be a dammable error.

Secondly, The Adoration of Saints, to whom they give religious worship, and invoke them as helpers, and honour them with fastings, watchings, and prayers, as Suarez acknowledgeth, and yet God is express, that he will not give his glory to another, 1/a. 42. 8. they are to be honoured indeed for imita-

tion, but not adored for Religion.

The third object is the Virgin Mary, to whom they pray more than they do to God. In the Rolary there is this Prayer. Beata Maria, Jalva omnes qui te glorificant. And we befeech thee to hear us good Lady. That Address, Monstra, te esse Matrem, and one divided, interubera & vulnera, the Breasts of the Virgin, and wounds of Christ, as if the milk of the one were as soveraign and as precious as the blood of the other. It were endless to rake in this filthy puddle: how many Books are there concluded with Laus Deo, & Virgini Depare? That sometimes there is a more present

present relief by commemorating the name of Mary, than by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus. In their exclamations, Jesus! Marria! How often in their Te Deum, We praise

thee O Lady?

Fourthly, Adoration of Images; This is more foul than all the former, because directed to a more gross object. This is prophesied of Antichrist, that he and his Abettors, they shall morship Idols of Silver, and Gold, and Brass, and Wood and Stone, Rev. 9. 20. Now tell a Papist of this, and they say, they do not terminate their worship in the Image, but in the party whom it representeth, the same said the Pagan. Non Lapidem sed Jovem in Lapide, Julian the Apostate. But God hath sorbidden bowing to, or before an Image.

Fifthly, The worshipping of the Cross, not only by cuppying, bowing, cringing, but Prayers. O Crux are spes unica boc Passionis Tempore, auge piis justitiam reisigs dona veniam. All hale O Cross, our only hope this time of passion, augment the Godly's Devotion, and

forgive the transgression of the guilty.

Sixthly, The Bread in the Sacrament, the Papilts give it Cultum Latric, that worthip which is due to God; those Heathens worthipped living Animals, but these adore a piece of Bread, kneel to it in their Chappels and Oratories; yea, in the midst of the Streets, when it is carried in Procession; these are the

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Idols whom they worthip; and what hope of Salvation is there in a Religion where the heart is turned fo much from God to the Creature? 2. That they are more culpable than the Heathens. 1. As to their Hypocrify, by distinctions and veil of Piety, wherewith they disquise all this: For this delight in unrighteoushess was called before the deceiverbleness of unrighteourness. They profess to abhor Idols, and yet worthip Images, and make that a point of Christianity, which is directly contrary to the drift of it, which is to teach us to worthip God in the Spirit. 2. As to their helps against it, the Pagans were never raught to do better, though they finned against the light of nature, in worthipping God by Images, yet they had no Scripture, no fuch express prohibitions to caution them, as we have from God. They pretend to believe the Scriptures, yet how do they feek to evade the force of them by crafty distinctions, that will never latisfie Conscience; though they help to blind the mind, and harden the heart. That which I urge is this, they were never interdicted this kind of worthin by their Gods. but their know that it is feverely forbidden by our God, and the fecond Commandement to stateth in their Faces, that it is expunded out of their Carechifms; and Vafquez is bold to affirm, that the fecond Commandement is Ceremonial. Lattantins of old faid, Non eft dubium.

dubium, religio nulla est ubi cujusa; simulachrum est. 3. The Pagans did adore their Gods in their Images, but never was any so sottish among them to imagine that an Image was to be adored with the same degree of worship as God himself; but this is the corrupt Doctrine of the Papists, that an Image is to be worshipped with the same worship, wherewith God himself is worshipped. Imagini Christi Latria debetur. Aquinas. That is the proper

worthip of God.

1: Use to shew how necessary it is, to take heed that we be not found among the followers of Antichrift; fince these errors are damnable. Salvation and damnation are not trifles, nor matters to be played withal: Surely we need have our eyes in our head, and not to be hood-winked, when we are upon the brink of a bottomless Gulph. Both sides lay damnation at one anothers Door; they for our departing from the Catholick Church, out of which is no Salvation as they pretend 5 we upon their departing from the Catholick Faith, and simplicity of the Gospel. Now external order is not of fuch confideration as Faith; but when they will be able to prove that Christ hath setled this order in the Church, that all his Subjects should be obedient to one univer-fal visible head, and that this head is the Pope; and therefore when their very Order is an incroachment and usurpation; to depart from

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from them, is to return to Christ ! Again, where is Salvation most likely to be found, rather with them who feek all their Religion in the Scriptures, and stick there; or with those, who not contented with the Apostolical Doctrine contained in the Scriptures, have brought in unwritten Traditions, as an equal rule of Faith with Scripture 3 and the Sacrifice of the Mass and Purgatory, the Religious Invocations of Saints, and many other enormities," and uphold these Innovations with all manner of Tyranny and Cruelty exercised upon Christs faithful Servants? If men go to Hea-? ven without Prayers which they understand, and Scriptures, half Christs Sacrament, a piece of his merits, and fome superthious observances, yea plain Idolatry, then the way to Heaven is sooner to be had in Popery; but he that hath but half an Eye, may foon fee which is the furer fide. Surely the furest way to avoid damnation, is to avoid fin. Now where are Souls fo much in danger of fin, as in the Ros man Society, where so little is given to internal life and piety, and fo much to external Pomp and Service; and where errors are fo palpable, that either men do not believe them with their hearts, or if their hearts were upright and not perverse and obstinate, could not believe them; but just so is the way of Popery to true Christianity. Surely whatever it be to Papilts, it would be absolutely damnable

damnable to us, as wilfully to thrust our selves upon apparent ruine. There is a cavil or pretence which I shall speak unto on this occasion. That many Protestants confess Papists may be faved in their Faith; whereas they hold Protestants and other Hereticks may not be faved out of the Catholick Church. And therefore it is fafe to enter into that way which is fafe by the confert of both parts, Ans. 1. Mens opinions are no ground of Faith. Persons may be in a sad woful Case, that men Tpeak well of , Luke 6. 26. We unto you when all men shall speak well of you. It is not what Man faith, but what the word of God faith: Now the word speaketh terrible things to them. [Them that periff and [That they all might be damned who believed not the truth | 8cc. Secondly, The word of God teacheth us to judge of the way, rather than persons, who stand or fall to their own Master. The way is damnable. If on the one fide there be Charity to some persons, that fin of invincible ignorance, and are faved as by fire, 1 Cor. 3. 13, which the other fide will not grant to a contrary perswafion; it argueth Charity on one fide, which hopeth all things; malice on the other, who rathly condemn men without evidence, yea, against it. 3. If this argument would hold good, it had been better in Christ and the Apoltles time to be a Jewish Profelyte, than a Christian; Christ acknowledgeth Salvation

Salvation is of the Jews, their promifes of adoption and glory, but the Jews pronounced him and his followers accurfed, scourged, imprisoned them; yet did not get so far as Papilts, to murder and butcher them. Suppose a little time that Catholicks owned Donatifts as Brethren, allowed their Baptism, but Donatists are rebaptized, and upon pain of damnation require all to to be, and fay, Save thy Soul, become a Christian. Now a Pagan should rather by this argument join himself to Donatists than Catholicks Lastly, The Argument may be retorted, A Protestant keepeth himself to his Bible, Baptismal Covenant, Creed, but denieth many things which Papilts believe and practife, as Papal Infallibility, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, worthipping of Images; they cannot but fay Protestants are in the right.

2. Use, observe the degrees of obduration, not receiving the truth in the love of it, believing a Lie, discarding Truth, and then taking pleasure in unrighteousness, and then

cometh Damnation.

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SERMON XIP

2 Theff. 2. 13.

But, we are bound to give thanks always to God, for you, Brethren, beloved of the Lord, because the Lord hath from the beginning chosen you to Salvation, through Santification of the Spirit, and belief of the Truth.

the Adversative Particle [But] sheweth what respect these words have to what went before; He had spoken of God's direful Judgment, of sending strong delusion on them, that had no love to the pure Truth, but sinned against Light, and had pleasure in the false worship, and superstitions, countenanced by the World. Now less the Thessalomians should be troubled at this sad prediction, he sheweth what cause he had to bless God in their behalf. The subjoining of this consolation doth teach us three things:

t. That it is a great favour of God to us, to escape Antichristian Errors. They are so dargerous in their own nature, so infinuative and inveigling by plausible appearance, and

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accompanied with such worldly baits and advantages; that it is a great mercy that God hath taught us better things. But then before you be in the right, out of Conscience and Evidence, not out of Faction and Interest. And that you hate Popery out of the love of the Truth, rather than because you are out of the reach of the temptation. However it is a great mercy, that God keepeth off the Temptation, till we are better setled in

Religion.

2. That the Election of God giveth a People great advantages against Errors, especially against the impostures of Antichrist; for when he speaketh of the fad estate of those who are feduced by the Man of Sin, he prefently addeth, but weare bound to give thanks to God for you, for he hath chosen you to Salvation. You will fay the Theffalonians received the Gospel before these corruptions were brought into the Church: but though Antichrist was not then in being, and this corrupt Christianity not then set a foot, yet there were some preparations for it. The mystery of iniquity already worketh, and they were preferved from the taint of it, by the Election of God; for either God suffereth not the Elect to be deceived in momentous points, or fooner or later hereduceth them : the purpose of God according ta Election must stand, Rom. 9.11. & Rom. 11.7. The Election bath obtained, and the reft

were blinded. So 2 Tim. 2. 18,19. They have overthrown the faith of some, nevertheless the Foundation of the Lord standeth sure. Still the Elect of God escape the seduction, and especially Antichristian Error. Rev. 13. 8. The dwellers upon Earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of

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3. How careful we should be to support the Hearts of God's People, when we fpeak of his terrible Judgments on the wicked. This was the practice of the Apostles every where; as when the Author to the Hebrews, had spoken of the dreadful estate of Apostates, whose end is to be burned, Heb. 6.9. But we are perfraded better things of you, and things that accompany Salvation, though we thus speak; he did not condemn them all as Apostates, nor would not discourage them by that terrible Threatning. So again, after another terrible passage, Heb. 10.39. But we are not of them, that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the faving of the Soul. Once more, when another Apostle had spoken of the Sin unto death, which is not to be prayed for, he presently addeth, 1 Joh. 5. 18, 19. Whosever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one touchesh him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole World lieth in wickedness. Zuinglim faith, Bone Christiane, has nihil ad

te, &c. Good Christian this is not thy portion, when he had flashed the terrours of the Lord in the face of Sinners. The reasons of this are partly with respect to the Saints, who fometimes out of weakness and infirmity, and fometimes out of tenderness of Conscience. are apt to be startled, electorum corda semper ad se sollicite pudeant. Gregor. We deserve such dreadful Judgments, and therefore fear them; partly with respect to our selves that we may rightly divide the Word of Truth. 2 Tim. 2. 15. Study to shew thy self approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. Give every one his portion, not make their hearts fad, whom God would not make fad; and therefore they are much to blame who in reproving Sinners, stab a Saint at the Heart, and take the doctrine but for a colour to make a perverse application. The Apostle here useth more tenderness; God shall send them strong delucion: But we are bound always to give thanks for you, Brethren, beloved of the Lord; because the Lord bath from the beginning chosen you to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the Truth.

In the words, are two things:

1. An acknowledgment of this obligation, to give thanks for them. But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, Brethren, &c.

2. The

2. The matter or particular cause of his thanksgiving; because the Lord hath from the

beginning chosen you to Salvation, &c.

First, There are, 1. the Titles he giveth: Brethren, and Beloved of the Lord, they were not only beloved of the Apostle, but the Lord himself; both with an antecedent Love, bestowing Grace upon them; and also a confequent Love, they believing in his Name, living according to his Precepts, suffering for the Truth. 2. His obligation to bless God in their behalf, we are bound to give thanks to God always for you. There is first giving thanks, which theweth his efteem of the bleffing. 2. Always, which sheweth how deeply he was affected with it. 3. Openous, We are bound, he acknowledgeth a Debt, and bond of Duty; we must not only give thanks to God for our own Election, but the Election of others. Out of the law of Brotherly Love, we loving them as our own Souls; respect to the Glory of God, which is promoted by the Salvation of others, as well as our felves.

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2. The matter of the thanksgiving, their Election to Salvation, which is two ways amplified. 1. By the Antiquity of it, from the beginning, that is, from everlasting; for so it is taken sometimes, as Joh. 1. 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; That is, before the first point of time,

before God began to create all things.

2. From the means of its accomplishment; two are mentioned: one on God's part, the fanctification of the Spirit. The other on ours, the belief of the Truth. From the whole observe.

Doc. That the great matter of our thanksgiving to God, is his eternal Election of us; whether for our felves, or others; This is that which leaveth a Debt, or an indispensible Obligation, always to bless and praise his

Name.

In pursuing this Point, Ishall first consider, how Election is here set forth. 2. Give you the reasons why this is the great matter of thanksgiving.

1. How it is here fet forth.

of God; for he calleth these Brethren, beloved of God; for he calleth these Brethren, beloved of the Lord. And that the only original cause and motive of Election is God's Love, and Grace; this is afferted in other Scriptures. As for instance in the Types of Election and Reprobation, Rom. 9. 13. Jacob have I loved, and Esan have I hated. God's respect to Jacob above Esan, is ascribed to his love. So to the posterity of Jacob, whom he distinguished from other Nations. Deut. 7. 7, 8. The Lord did not set his love upon you, and choose you, because ye were more in number than any People, for se were the fewest of all People; but because

becamfe the Lord loved you. And still the Lord's Election is an Election of Grace. There is no antecedent worthiness in the People whom he chooseth, 2 Tim. 1.9. not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose, and Grace, which was given in Christ Jesus, before the World began. Now Grace is nothing, but the Love of God working freely, and of its own Inclination.

2. The Act it felf, he hath chosen you, making a distinction between them, and others. Upon them he shall fend strong delution, but you hath he chosen to Salvation, through the belief of the Truth. Those whom God hath chosen, he separates from the World of the ungodly, or the corrupt heap of mankind, and confecrateth them unto himfelf. So that Election is not a taking all, but fome, and passing by others; I Joh. 5. 19. We are of God, and the whole World lyeth in wickedness. A choice, implyeth a setting apart fome for Objects of his Grace, and Instruments of his Glory in the World; Pfal. 4. 3. And the number is certain, for their Names are faid to be written in the Rolls, and Records of Heaven, when others are not written. Luk. 10. 20. Rejoyce not, that the Spirits are sabject unto you : but rather rejoyce because your Names are written in Heaven. Phil. 4. 3. Whose Names are written in the Book of Life, And others are faid not to be written.

Rev. 17. 1. And they that dwell on the Earth. shall wonder, whose Names were not written in the Book of Life, from the Foundation of the World. And Rev. 20. 13. And who sever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the Lake of Fire. Namely those that

perish by these Delusions.

3. It is fet forth by the Antiquity of it, from the Beginning. Ephel. 1. 4. He bath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World. And Matth. 25. 34 Come, ye Bleffed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World. Namely as they belonged to his choice Election. Love in God is of an old standing, even from all Eternity; his thoughts and purposes of Love, were towards us, a long time before they were discovered. Surely the Ancientness of his Love should beget an honourable esteem of it in our Hearts: For who are we, that the Thoughts of God should be taken up about us so long ago? And what is from everlasting, is to everlasting, Pfal. 103. 17. For what is from Eternity is to Eternity, and dependeth not upon the accidents of Time.

4. By the means of its accomplishment. Two are mentioned, one on God's part, the other on ours. The Sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the Truth. Where

note.

1. That God's Decree is both of Ends, and Means. For all his Purposes are executed by fit Means. He that hath chosen us to Salvation, hath also chosen us to be Holy, and to believe the Truth. And without the Means, the End cannot be obtained. For without Faith and Holiness, no grown Person shall fee God, or escape Condemnation. As to Faith it is clear. John 3. 36. He that be-Vieweth not, the Wrath of God abideth on him. And Holiness is indispensibly necessary. Heb. 12.14. Without Holines no Man Shall see the Lord. God had affured Paul, Acts 27.22. That there should be no loss of any Man's Life, amongst them, except of the Ship; and afterward, Verf. 31. Paul telleth them, Except these abide in the Ship, ye cannot be saved. How could the affurance given to Paul from God, and Paul's caution to the Mariners stand together? Doth the Purpose of God depend upon the will and actions of Men? I answer: Not as a cause from whence it receiveth its force and strength, but as a means appointed also by God, to the execution of his Decree. For by the same Decree God appointeth the Event, what he will do, and the Means by which he will have it to be done; and the Lord revealing by his Word this Conjunction of End and Means, there is a necessity of Duty lying upon Man, to use these Means, and not to expect the End, without them, God

God intended to fave all in the Ship, and yet the Mariners must abide in the Ship. And therefore what God hath joyned together, let no Man separate. If we separate these things, God doth not change his Counfel, but we subvert his Order, to our own destruction. The Scripture maketh it a grievous Sin. a tempting of God, to expect the End, without the use of Means. In vain is the Cavil then of those, who would impeach the Dodrine of God's free and unchangeable Will, concerning the falvation of the Elect, upon the pretence, that it taketh away the Duty of Man; and the necessity of our Faith, and Obedience. No, God executeth his Decree by the proper Means. And wretched is their inference, who fay, If I be elected, I shall be faved; no Salvation can be obtained but by the Sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the Truth. And worse is their confidence, who profess affurance of their Election, and yet walk after the Flesh: No, till a Man purge himself from Youthful Lusts, he is not a Vessel of Honour fanctified and set apart for God, 2 Tim.2.21. And in vain do we hope to go to Heaven, till we take the way that leadeth thither. Devils have been cast out thence for Unholiness, and therefore unholy Men shall never be taken in there.

2. That these things are not causes of Election, but fruits of Election, and Means of

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execution of God's Decree, about our Salvation: Sanctification is not a Caufe, but a fubordinate End, or Means. Ephel. 1. 4. He bath chosen we to be holy; not because we are holy, but that we might be holy. So i Pet. 1.2. Elect according to the fore-knowledg of God, through the sandification of the Spirit, unto Obedience. Not elected for it, but through it. When God had all Mankind in his prospect and view, he freely chose out some to be sanctified and saved. We come to the possession of it, through Sanctification, that is, by it as a Means. So for the other: Faith is a fruit of Election, not a foreseen Caufe. Acts 2. 47. The Lord added to the Church daily fuch as should be saved. None cometh to the Church but those whom God draweth, and they are actually added to the Church by a profession of Faith; and such as should be faved, were as many as were ordained to Salvation. Acts 13.48. And as many as were ordained to Eternal Life, believed. The whole City were met together to hear, but as many as were ordained to Eternal Life, believed. It is not faid as many as believed were ordained to Eternal Life, but the contrary; Faith is not the cause of Election, but Election is the cause of Faith.

3. That being the necessary Fruits, they are also evidences of our Election. All that are Sanctified by the Spirit, and believe the

Truth,

Truth, belong to the Election of God. Election it felf, is a fecret in God's Boson, and is only manifested to us by the Effects, and what are the necessary Effects, but Sanctification by the Spirit, and a sound belief of the

Gospel.

1. The Sanctification of the Spirit, is not only an external Dedication to God, but an internal and real Change. Some are externally dedicated, and may trample under foot the Blood of the Covenant, whereby they are fanctified. Heb. 10. 29. Of how much sorer Punishment (suppose ye) shall be be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God; and bath counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sandified, an unboly Thing, and bath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace? That is, were in external Covenant with God, and visibly dedicated. But there is an other Sanctification, which is the Fruit of the Spirit, wating a real Change in them. I Cor. 6. 11. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are justified, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Find this, and you find a fufficient Evidence: Namely, if you become new Creatures, and be enabled to forfake Sin, and follow after that which is pleasing in the fight of God. Sanctification of the Spirit, is not so much known by Dedication and Profession, but by the real and

and fixed inclination of your Souls to God and Heaven, and living accordingly; you

are turned to God, and live to God.

2. Your belief of the Truth, that is, of the Gospel. Now this is meant not of a dead Faith, or fuch a cold Affent, as only begets an Opinion in us of the truth of Christian Religion; but fuch a lively Faith, as bringeth us under the power of it. For it is opposed to them that do not receive the Truth in the love of it, Ver. 10. To them that believed not the Truth, because they had pleasure in Unrighteousness: Ver. 12. That lived under the power of fleshly and worldly Lusts. And it is spoken of them who had received the Truth, so as to obey it, and suffer for it, as the Theffalonians are described all along. And in short, such a belief of the Truth, as caused them to enter into Covenant with Christ, and make conscience of their Fidelity to him. And here in this Verse we learn, That a bare belief of the Truth doth not fave, unless accompanied with the Sandiffication of the Spirit. And therefore both must be taken together: when the Word cometh to us not in Word only, but in Power, and much assurance and joy in the Holy Ghost, it is an infallible evidence of our Election of God, I Theff. 1.5. Alas, many have a general cold belief of the Gospel, that never felt the effect of it upon their Hearts. 4. Observ 4. Observe the necessary Connection that is between both these Means. The Sanctification of the Spirit, and the Belief of the Truth.

I. There is a necessary Connection between them, as between the Cause and the Effect: For none are powerfully drawn to believe in Christ, but such as are Sanctified by his Spirit. It is not in the power of any Creature to incline us to God, or bring us to come to him by Christ. But this Work is wholly referved to the Spirit. And so the Lord himself doth powerfully bring to pass his own Decrees, as by Christ Redeeming, fo by the Spirit Sanctifying. The Spirit is the Author both of Faith and Holiness. Sa ving Grace is called a New Creature 2 Cor. 5. 17. Therefore if any Man be in Christ, be to a New Creature. Ephel. 2. 10. For we are bis Warkmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which God bath before ordained, that we should walk in them. And to Create, is the Work of a Divine Power. Creature, and Creator, are Relatives. And certainly the noblest Creature, such as the New Creature is, cannot be framed by any but God. It is called a New Birth, and the New Birth is only from the Spirit, John 3. 5, 6. Well then, these are fitly coupled, the Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth. That God's Work may make way for ours,

2. There is the Connection of Concomi-

tancy between the Gospel and the Spirit. The Spirit only goeth along with the Gospel, and no other Doctrine; and to both external and internal Grace, are of God. John 17. 17. Sanctific them by thy Truth, thy Word is Truth. It was fit that a Super-natural Dodrine should be accompanied with a Supernatural Operation, and Power; How elfe should it be known to be of God? The Truth and the Spirit are inseparable Companions. Where there is little of God known. there is little of his Spirit. As in the Natural Truth revealed to the Heathens; Somewhat God shewed unto them, Rom. 1, 19. In the darker Revelation to the Terry there is but . a fainter degree of the Spirit; but Grace and Truth come by Jefus Christ. There goeth along with the Doctrine of the Gospel, a mighty Spirit of Holines; for thereby God would prove the Verity and Truth of this Religion, and fuitably to the rich Mercy prepared for us in Christ.

3. There is a subordination of Faith to this Work of the Spirit, by the Truth. For the greatest Things work not till they be considered and believed. I Thess. 2. 12. Ye received it, not as the Word of Men, but as it is in Truth the Word of God, which worketh effectivally also in you that believe. A found Belief produceth strong Affections, and strong Affections govern our Practice and Conversa-

tion. So that fitly are these things united as the fruits of our Election, and means of Salvation.

2. Why this is the great matter of our thanfgiving to God, That I shall evidence

in the following considerations.

1. That Thanksgiving to God is a great and necessary duty, expresly injoined by him, and expected from us. 1 Theff. 5.18. In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God concerning you, in Christ Jesus. When God hath interposed his Will, all debates are silenced. If there were nothing else in the case; this is motive enough to a gracious Heart; for the fundamental reason of all obedience, is the Will of God. Our thankfulness is no benefit to God, yet he is pleafed with it, as it theweth our Honesty and Ingenuity. And to us Christians, the very Life and Soul of our Religion is Thankfulnefs; therefore God will have us continually exercised in it. Heb. 13. 15. Let us offer the Sacrifice of Praise continually, that is, the fruit of our Lips, giving thanks unto his Name. As our understanding was given us, to think of God, and know him : So our fpeech was given us to speak of God, and praise him. We praise God for all his works, we give him thanks for such as are beneficial to us. In Praise we ascribe all Honour, Excellency, and Perfection unto him: In giving thanks we express what he hath done, for our Celves.

felves, or others. Now this must be done continually, for God is continually beneficial unto us, by daily Mercies giving us new matter of Praise and Thanksgiving. Besides there are some Mercies so great, that they

should never be forgotten.

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2. That we are to give thanks, chiefly for Spiritual and Eternal Mercies. Eph. 1. 3. Bleffed be the God and Father of our Lord Tefus Christ, who bath blessed us with all spiritual blescannot give thanks rightly without a just e-freem of the Mercy we give thanks for. But for itual and eternal Mercies, do much excel those that are temporal and transitory. are bound to bless the Lord for temporal Fayours, and the Comforts of this Life, but a renewed Heart is most taken up with spiritual and heavenly Bleflings. A Man may give thanks carnally, as well as pray carnally. carnal Man in Prayer giveth vent to the defires of the Flesh. James 4.3. So in Bleshing God, he may speak from the relish of the Flesh: though usually carnal Men, seldom give thanks to God. Holea 12. 8. I am be-Surely Spiritual Bleffings should have the preheminence, because they concern our well-being, and they discriminate us from others, which temporal Mercies do not. Eccl. 9, 1, 2. For all this I considered in my Heart, even to declare

declare all this, that the Righteons, and the wife, and their works, are in the Hand of God; no Man knoweth either Love or Hatred, by allthat is before them. All things come alike to all! there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked a to the good, to the clean, and to the unclean a to him that facrificeth, and to him that facrificeth not; as is the Good, fo is the Sinner; and be that sweareth, as be that feareth an Oath. The wicked have many of these Mercies. Pfal. 17. 1'4. From Men of the World, which have their portion in this Life, and whose Belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of Children, and leave the rest of their Substance to their Babes. And they may own God in them as pleased, and well satisfied with the prosperity of the Flesh, or as defirous to have more.

3. That the best prospect we have of God's Goodness to us, as to those spiritual Mercies,

is in Election.

1. There we see all our Blessings in their rise, fountain, and bosom-cause, which is the eternal Love, and Grace of God. Dulcine ex ipso Foirte, Waters are sweetest and freshelt in their Fountain; there we see that antecedent Love, which provided a Redeemer for us: which should be matter of continual Love and Reverence to us. Job. 3. 16. There we see the rich preparations of Grace, in the new Covenant; which could never have entred into our Hearts, if elective love had not provi-

provided them for us. 1 Cor. 2, 9. There we fee, what it was that disposed all those Providences, that conduced to our good. Birth, Education, Acquaintance, Relations; also, we knew not the means of all these things, but elective Love was at work for us, to cast all circumstances, that we might be best taken in our Month. Rom. 8, 28. There we see what it was that made all the means effectual to draw us unto God. Jet. 5, 3. He loved as with

an everlasting Love.

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. It theweth us the Lord's diftinguilhing Grace and who it was that made us differ from others, who are left to perish in their Sins. All are not called, and why we? Joh. 14. 22. Judas faith unto him, not Ifcariot Lord how is it that thou wilt manifest thy sch winto us and not unto the World? yea marry mighty and many hoble are not called. i Cor. 1. 26. God taketh not all, nor any of the highest in esteem among Men, not many wise and prisdent. Math. 11. 25, 26. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee O Father, Lord of Herven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wife and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes: even fo Father, for fo it feemed good in thy fight. Yea, many others are left to perilh by their son delutions. The Reprobates are Specula Judicii Divini. The Judgments of God on the wicked do exceedingly amplify his Mercies towards us. It was Bb a the

the meer elective love of God, iffuing forth by his powerful and differencing Grace, that put the distinction between us and others. Surely his peculiar Love to our felves doth

most affect us.

3. There we see that Grace, that doth take off all felf-boalting. Eph. 2.8, 9. For by Grace are ve faved, through Faith; and that not of your setnes: it is the gift of God: not of works, left any Man should books, Elective Love prevented all actual or foreseen worth in us. And from first, to last, it is carried on in a way of Grace: the Means, the Efficacy, all is of Grace. This was God's great end, that Grace might be admired and efteemed by us. and be matter of eternal Praise and Thanksgiving. Eph. 1. 6. To the praise of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he bath made us accepted in the Beloved. The whole Design is to shew us how we are beloved of God: and that we may love him again."

y love him again.

1. Use. If Election be the great matter of Thanksgiving to God: Then surely this Doctrine should be heard in the Church; for the Life and Soul of Christian Religion is Gratitude; and what feedeth Gratitude, is of great use unto us : our Gratitude doth not rife high enough, till it come to the first cause that Stirred and set all the Whats awork, in the busi-ness of our Salvation. Surely this is a very

profitable Point.

I. To detect the pride of Man, for here we feethe true and proper cause of difference between us and others. I Cor. 4-7. Who maheth thee to differ ? The differencing Grace of God, proceeding from his Election, is the

only true Grace.

2. Nothing more extolleth the Glory of God in our Salvation: For if Man can affume nothing to himfelf, the Glory alone redoundeth to God. The more reason and cause why some are chosen, and others past by, is God's good Pleasure. Matth. 11. 26. Even fo Father, because it pleased thee. Christ himself consents to it; giveth Thanks for it, as an act

of free and undeferved Mercy.

3. No greater incentive to Holiness. For here we see the absolute necessity of it, together with the strongest, sweetest motive to enforce it. 1. The absolute necessity of it; because it is a necessary means to bring God's purpoles to pals. Eph. 1.4. He hath chosen us, that we should be holy, and without blame before bim in love. He hath chosen none to enjoy everlafting Glory after this Life, but fuch as he hath cholen to be holy here. First, they must be fanctified, and renewed by the Spirit, and then walk in all holy Conversation and Godlines. And whatever affurance of Election is pretended unto them who lead an unholy Life, it is but a vain presumption, or ungrounded Perswasion, yea a strong Delusion. Se-Bb 3 condly,

condly, Here is the sweetest and strongest Motive to enforce it, and that is the singular Love of God, which breedeth in us a sincere Love to God again, and all serious endeavours to approve our selves to him in purity of Living. There is no such constraining force in any thing, as there is in Love. 2 Cor. 5. 14. For the Love of God constraineth us, &c. And no such Holiness as that which sloweth from it; this is thankful and Evangelical Obedience.

4. It is the ground of our folid Comfort, in the midst of all the Calamities and Temptations of the present Life: because our final happiness is appointed to us by God's electing Love. Luk. 12. 32. Fear not, little Flock, for it is your Fathers good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom. And this is accompanied with his active Providence and Care over us all the way thither. So that all things are sanctified to us, that we may be sanctified to God. Rom. 8. 28. And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the Called according to his purpose.

2. It sheweth us that the Elect have cause to bless God if they be chosen to Salvation, though not to Wealth, Pleasure, and Honour. These Thessalonians endured great Afflictions for the Gospel sake, yet Paul looked upon himself as bound to give thanks always to God for them; because he had chosen

them

them to Salvation. God disperseth his Gifts varioufly, some are (shall I say) chosen (or condemned rather) to Worldly Felicity. It is the Will of God they should attain great Wealth, and Honour here; and will you envy them, and repine against Providence, though God hath referved you for a better Estate hereafter? Compare two places, one is Jer. 17.13. All that for fake thee, shall be written in the Earth. The other is Luke 10.20. Rejoyce in this, that your Names are written in Heaven. Which is the better Privilege, to be written in Earth, or to be written in Heaven? To have a great Name in the Subsidy-Book, or to have our Names written in the Book of Life? The one is their Punishment, the other your Bleffedness.

Second Use is Exbortation. It present you

to two things.

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1. Put in for a share and interest in this Mercy, that is to say, in the Apostle's words, 2 Pet. 1. 10. Give deligence to make your Calling and Election sure. God hath told us who are Elected, and who are not. Therefore our way is to accept of the general Grace offered, and to devote and resign our selves to God, and to depend upon the Merits of our Redeemer, and put our selves under the Discipline of his Spirit, in the use of the appointed Means, humbly waiting for his renewing and reconciling Grace, and every Day more and Bb 4

more, by diligence in the holy and heavenly Life, getting your Interest more affured. For by this means do we come to know the purposed Love of God, and that he hath not appointed us to Wrath, but to obtain eternal Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christs We need not fay, who shall go up to Heaven to know the Mind of God? Our Election is known to us by our Vocation, and our Vocation by the Fruits, our walking before him in Holines, and Righteousness all our Days. Surely the knowledg of our Election is a thing greatly to be defired, because our Eternal Happiness, and all Spiritual good Things depend upon it. Election is the free Love of God, by which he intendeth these Bleffings to us. This is manifested by Calling, by which they begin to be applied to us; then the effectual Operation which these Blessings have in us discovereth Calling, when we call on the Name of Christ, and depart from Iniquity, 2 Tim. 2. 19.

2. We should praise, and admire, and esteem this glorious Grace, and shew our Thankfulness both in Word and Deed.

1. In Word, because that is a means to kindle in our Hearts the Love of God, and to stir up a Spiritual rejoycing in him. Psal. 1c3. 1, 2, 3. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits.

nesits. Who forgiveth all thine Iniquities; who healeth all the Diseases, &c.

2. But chiefly in Deed, you are more obliged to live to God, than other Men; when passing by thousands who in outward respects were better than you: and you as deep in Sin as they: Not only without, but against all merit of yours, by his singular Grace set you apart for himself. Shall I fin against God, and grieve his Spirit? No: Let me glorifie him as long as I have a Day to live.

SERMON XII

2 Theff. 2. 14.

Whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A Fter the Doctrine of Antichrist, and God's dreadful Spiritual Judgments on his Abetters and Followers, the Apostle interpoleth some matter of Consolation to the Thessalonians: As before he comforted them from their Election, so now from their Vocation. Therefore as we saw the Doctrine of Election, fet forth in the former Verse, with all its appendant Branches, and Circumstances: So now the Doctrine of Vocation, with what belongeth to it. Here Calling is fet forth, (1.) By the Author of it, he called you; that is God, who from the beginning hath chosen you to Salvation. (2.) The outward Means, by our Gospel. (3.) The End, which is double. 1. Subordinate, in the word [Whereuntos] to Faith and Holiness. 2. Ultimate, to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whereunto be called you, &c.

Doct. All that are Elected by God, are in

time,

time, effectually called by Faith and Holiness, to obtain Eternal Life.

1. I shall open effectual Calling by what is faid of it in the Text. 2. That all chosen

by God are called in this Way.

1. Let me explain Effectual Calling. 1. The Author of it, he called you: Namely God, fpoken of in the former Verse. I prove it by these two Reasons, 1. None else hath Authority to call. 2. None else hath Power to call.

1. Authority to call, either to Duties, or Priviledges; for Calling is an earnest invitation to Duties, upon the offer of several

Priviledges.

(1.) Duties. 1. God is our proper Lord, and rightful Soveraign. He may justly challenge our Obediencesbeing our Creator, he is our Owner; and being our Owner, he is our Soveraign and Law-giver, and may enact what Laws he pleafeth. "Certainly Creation giveth him an interest in us. For every Man taketh himself to have an Authority over what he hath made, to dispose of it as he pleaseth. Now he that properly made all things is God. Man is faid to make a thing as he bestoweth Art upon it, but God bestoweth Being upon it. A Potter may form his Clay into what Veffel he pleaseth, to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another unto dishonour, Rom. 9. 21. that is, either a Dish for Food, or a Vessel to ferve the vilest uses of Nature, for Meat, or ExcreExcrements. But we speak of Rational Creatures, that are capable of proper Government. Surely God made us, and hath a right to govern us. Our Parents are but Instruments of his Providence, they know not how the Child is framed in the Womb, &c. Now he calleth upon us to do our Duty, with Original Supreme Authority we may refuse others; if they speak not to us in his Name, they have no right over our Consciences, to impose new Duties upon us. James 4.12. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save, and to destroy. Now his Calling, being a powerful Excitation to do our Duty.

it originally belongeth to God.

(2.) As to Priviledges. The Bleffings God offereth, are so great and glorious, that none else can give us a right to them but God. And the Soul can have no fecurity that it. doth not usurp, and intrude upon the posfession of Things that belong not to us, till we have his Warrant: As the Apostle speaketh of an Office, Heb. 5. 4. No Men taketh this Honour unto himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron. So it is true of all Prerogatives, we have no leave to assume and take the Honour of them to our felves. till we are called of God: That's our Warrant. None came to the Wedding-Feast, till they were bidden, Matth. 22. Or went into the Vineyard till they were hired, Matth. 20. This

This is the difference between Duties, and Priviledges. That any Man who will prefer that Office of Charity and Love to us, may excite us to our Duties, to unquestionable Duties, due from the Creature to our Creator: But no Man can assure us of right to Priviledges, without the Creators leave. Man cannot make that to be a necessary Duty to the Greator, which is not. But Man may warn us of our danger, when we disobey God; but Man cannot assure us of our right to such Priviledges, without God's grant. Therefore certainly it is God that must call us.

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2. None else can have Power: for, to Calling there is necessary not only the Invitations of the Word, but also the effectual Operation of the Spirit. None else can change the Heart. A Christian is nothing, and hath nothing, but what God is pleased to work in him by his Divine Power. 2 Pet.1.3. According as his Divine Power hath given wall things, that pertain unto Life and Godliness, through the Knowledg of him that hatb called us to Glory and Vertue. It is a work of an infinite Power, to give Grace to graceless Souls. To make those that are Sensual and Worldly, to become Spiritual and Heavenly; there being so much opposition to hinder that Work: For such is the corruption of Mens Hearts, the power of Satan over us, that

he keepeth possession, till a stronger than he overcometh him, Luke 11.21. Therefore it is always made the work of his Power, who calleth the things that are not, as though they were, Rom. 4.17. It is still ascribed to his creating Power: Either the illumination of the Mind; 2 Cor. 4.6. For God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts; to give the light of the knowledg of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. Or inclinations of the Heart; Ephes. 2.10. We can neither think, nor effect, nor pursue Spiritual and Heavenly Things without it. Therefore certainly it is God that calleth us.

2. The outward Means, by our Gospel. Where, 1. Consider the Means it self, The Gospel. 2. The Interest which the Apostic

challengeth in it, our Gofpel.

1. The Means it felf, the Gospel. This God

uleth,

(1.) Because if God will Call, and invite the Creature by his Dury, to his Happiness: It is necessary that his Call should be evident to the Creature, by some visible sign. Now the natural Duty of Man, is much seen by the Creation. Rom. 1.19. Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, for God bath shewed it unto them. Psal. 19. 1,2. The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-Work: Day un-

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to Day uttereth Speech, and Night unto Night (beweth Knowledg. But this Call is made to Man fallen, as a Remedy to his lapled Estate, which depending on the Free-Grace of God. and can only be known by his Revelation, conveyed to us by extraordinary Messengers, fuch as Christ, who was the principal Reyealer of the Doctrine of God for the faving of the World: And him God authorized and sealed to this end. John 6, 27. Labour not for the Meat which perisheth, but for that Meat which endureth unto everlasting Life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you; for him bath God the Father sealed. And then by the Apostles, who were instituted by Christ, and sent forth to proselyte the World to the Obedience of God; and they were also authorized from Heaven by divers Signs and Wonders, as long as it was necesfary to use that Dispensation, for the confirmation of their Message, and to shew how dangerous it was to neglect a Doctrine so useful to Mankind, and suitable to their great Necessities, and so owned by God, Heb. 2. 3, 4. Therefore by the Golpel God called them to this Grace.

(2.) To convince and ftop their Mouths, that refuse this Calling: for the Gospel bringeth Grace home to us, and leaveth it upon our choice; if we will accept it, well and good: if not, we justly deserve to be rejected

for ever. Acts 13.26. To you is this Word of Salvation fent. What fay you to it? God hath fent a gracious Message to you in particular, will you accept, or refuse? Acts 3. 26. He hath sent him to you, to bless every one of you, &c. It doth excite all, and every Man, to look after the recovery of his lapfed Estate: Surely God doth you no wrong, if he severely punish your refusal, after he hath invited you to his Grace in Christ. Great is the Misery of those that refuse this Call. None of those that were bidden, shall tafte of my Supper, Luke 14. 24. They are not only excluded from Happines, but they incur extreme Wrath and Milery Prov. 1. 24, 25, 26. Because I have Called, and se refused; I have stretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof: I also will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh,

(3.) Because to the Elect he will deal congruously, and preserve the Liberty of his own Workmanship; and therefore dealeth with Man, as Man: Doth not compel us to be good whether we will or no, but doth at the same time teach and draw us. John 6, 44, 45. No Mancan come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him: And I will raise him up at the last Day. It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught

taught of God. Every Man therefore that bath beard, and bath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Sweetly attemperating the means to our Liberty, but accompanying them with his powerful Grace. Acts 11.21. The Hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord. It is God doth all, prospering the Labours of his Servants. So Atts 16. 14. God opened the Heart of Lydia, so that she attended unto the things hoken by Paul. God opened her Heart, but by the things spoken by Paul. And God loveth to affociate or accompany his Power with his own Means. Rom. 1. 16. It is the Power of God unto Salvation.

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2. The Interest the Apostle challengeth in it, [our Goffel]; Doth it not derogate from the Authority of it, to appropriate it to any Man? I answer, No. Essewhere it is called God's Gospel, The glorious Gospel of the Bleffed God, I Tim. I. II. He is the Author: It is not an Invention of Man, but a Secret that came from the Bosom of God. Again, it is called Christ's Gospel. The Go-Spel of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Theff. 1.8. As the principal Subrevealer, who made " known unto us, most fully the Mind of God. And then on the Apostles, who were Instruments chosen, and intrusted by Christ to declare it; to the World both by Word and

Writing. The Scripture is an Authentick Record, wherein all things are delivered to us, both concerning our Duties, and Priviledges. Therefore, when he faith, our Gospel, he doth not mean it of principal Revelation, but in regard of Dispensation, and Trust. 1 Tim. 1. 11. The glorious Gospel of the Bleffed God is committed to my trust. Therefore this word (our Oospel) is, 1. A word of Fidelity, that argued the Conscience to this Duty, that owneth the Trust committed to him, and that this was his chief Work and Charge. 1 Cor. 9. 17. A Dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me. 2. It is a word of Esteem, Love, and Affection; what we love, we call ours. Rom. 16. 25. Now to him that is able to stablish you according to my Goffel. Paul was glad he had fuch Interest in it, as to be a Preacher of it. And Believers should be glad they are partakers of the benefit. Ephel. 1. 13. In whom ye trusted after ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your Salvation. It is theirs, and ours. Oh bleffed be God for this! 3. It is a work importing Diligence; our Gospel, that which he preached with so much Labour, and Hazard; he followed this Work close. Acts 20. 24. I count not my Life dear, that I may finish my Course with joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testifie

willing to die and suffer any thing for the Gospels sake. 4. The Consent and Harmony between him and the rest of the Apostles. Sometimes he calleth it, My Gospel, to affert his own Apostolical Authority, as Rom. 2. 16. Sometimes, Our Gospel, 2 Cor. 4. 3. to note their common Consent, who were the authorized Messengers of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is our Gospel, the same jointly attested by all Christ's chosen Messengers.

3. The ends of this Calling. They are either Subordinate, or Ultimate. (1.) Subordinate in the word (Whereunto he bath called you) that is, to Faith, Holiness, and Sal-

vation, we are called to all.

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1. God calleth us to the Faith of the Gofpel, he hath not only ordained us to believe, but called us to believe; without Calling there can be no Faith. Rom. 10. 14. How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? But upon Calling, there must be Faith; or else we make void the Dispensation of God, which we are under. 1. There must be a belief of the Gospel in general. The voice of the Creatures calleth upon the Gentiles to believe an Infinit, Eternal Power, that made Man, and all Things: And the condemnation of the Gentle World is, that they know not God, and glorifie not God,

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as God, after this Revelation made to them; but to believe in Christ is a mystery to Nature, and dependeth upon God's special Revelation in the Gospel. Therefore the Eternal and Internal Power of the Spirit, accompanieth it, to convince the World, that it is Sin not to believe in Christ. The External Power in Miracles, and the Internal in the Illumination of the Mind: John 16. 9. The Spirit shall convince the World of Sin: because they believe not in me. That is, receive not the Faith of the Gospel, or believed not that Christ was the true Messiah, the great Prophet and Doctor of the Church.

2. This Call doth aim at not only a belief of the truth of the Gospel in general, but also a particular Affiance in Christ, according to the terms of the New Covenant: General assent to the truth of the Gospel, is only considerable as it leadeth on other Things. Now that I may not wander, I will refer them to two Things. 1. A Fiducial Assent. 2. An Obediential Considence. This is the belief of the Truth we are called unto.

1. The Assent must be Fiducial, or accompanied with a trust in Christ. Ephes. 1. 13. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your Salvation. The meaning is, the Gentiles after they heard the Gospel, and believed the Truth, they

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did trust themselves in the Hands of Christ, to be brought by his Saving and Healing Methods to eternal Happiness. It is a mighty thing to have such a Belief as may produce Trust, or a venturing our selves in the Hands of Christ, against all hazards; and whatever befalleth us, are content to save our Souls on his Terms: This breedeth holy Security, or Courage. 2 Tim. 1. 12. For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have com-

mitted unto him against that Day.

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2. This Confidence must be Obediential, not a devout Sloath, or Carelessness. trust in his Mercies and neglect his Precepts, crosseth the Tenor of his Covenant. 119.60. I made baste, and delayed not, to keep thy Commandments. It is true Religion, when Faith, Love, and Hope concur. Jude ver. 20,21. But ye, Beloved, building up your selves on your most holy Faith, joyning in the Holy Ghost; keep your selves in the Love of God, looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto Eternal Life. I know there is a trusting in his Pardon for our Failings, and that Justification is a great Privilege, as well as Salvation; but Pardon is promised to the Sincere, that with an honest Heart perform their Duty! Pfal. 32. 2. Bleffed is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity 3 and

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in whose Spirit there is no guile. And Rom. 8. 1. There is no Condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus: who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit. So that still our considence in Christ must be obediential.

2. We are called to Holiness, this is every where afferted in the Scripture. 1 The J. 4. 7. For God bath not called us to Uncleanness, but to Holiness. And it enforces it on sever

veral Grounds:

As (1.) That there may be a likeness between the Person calling, and the Persons called. I Pet. 1. 15. But as he that called you is Holy, so be je holy in all manner of Conversation. It is true Religion, to imitate what we worship: For Knowledg and Esteem, always work an Assimulation; and therefore if we know the True God, and love him. we will study to be like him. Certainly, we have not a true knowledg of God, if we do not know him to be a Pure and Holy God; he hath shewed it in his Laws, shewed it in his Providence, and shewed it in his Gospel. by which we are called. The Gods of the Heathen taught Sin, by their own Example: Their impure Lives, are recorded by their Poets. Austin telleth us of a Young Man, who was encited to Wantonness, by feeing the Picture of Jupiter on the Wall, committing Adultery. Quo pacto se non faceret, cum in Templo adorare cogeretur Jovem potius quam Catonem.

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Catonem. But our God is Pure, as appeareth by his Laws, which are all Holy, Just, and Good, Psal. 119, 140. Surely such holy Precepts could come from none, but a Pure and Holy God. As also by the Work of his Spirit on his People. Ephel 4.24. And that ye put on the New Man, which after God is created in Righteouspess and true Holiness. And a Cor.3. 18. We all, with open Face, beholding as in a Glass, the Gory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. He puts into us a Nature that is very tender and thie of Sin, troubled at it in others. 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8. And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy Conversation of the Wicked: For that Righteous Man dwelling among ft them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous Soul, from day to day, with their unlawful Deeds. He that made the Eye, shall not he see? He that put into us a clean Heart, is not he Pure and Holy? This appeareth also by the dispensations of his Providence. Hab. 1.13. Thou art of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, and canst not look on Iniquity : Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy Tongue, when the Wicked devoureth the Man that is more Righteous than he? Judgments on Sinners, fo on his own People. Prov. 11. 31. Behold the Righteous shall be recompensed in Earth, much more the Wicked and the Sinner. As for Instance in David: The Child died, his Daughter is defloured, Ammon flain, Abfolon is in Rebellion, his Wives Ravished, himself Banished from his House and Kingdom. Elis Sons slain, the Ark taken, his Daughter-in-Law died, himself brake his Neck. But chiesty in the very Foundation of the Gospel, the Son of God dieth a Shameful, Painful, Accursed Death, before God would relax the Rigour of his Law, and set a-foot the Gospel: And all that there might be a perfect Demonstration of his Justice and Holiness, and displeasure against Sin. Rom. 8.3. For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the Flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful Flesh, and for Sin condemned Sin in the Flesh.

(2.) The very nature of this Calling enforceth this Sanctification, or fetting Man apart from a common to a facred use. For it is a calling us not only from Misery to Happiness, but from Sin to Holiness; and the one is indispensibly necessary to the other. For none but those who are in an holy Estate, can be in a blessed Condition. Our calling is sometimes called a Heavenly Calling, Heb. 3. 1. Sometimes an Holy Calling, 2 Tim. 1.9. Therefore the chief subordinate end, is Holiness. Rom. 1. 7. Called to be Saints, from the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, to God.

(3.) The grace and favour which is shewed

in our Calling, obligeth us to be Holy, in point of Gratitude: For when we confider in what a finful estate God found us, how freely he loved us, and that with a difcriminating differencing Love, when he paffed by others worthier than we; and to what estate he is ready to advance us, to the enjoyment of himfelf, amongst all those that are Sanctified by Faith: All these are as so many strong Bonds and Obligations upon us, to walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his Kingdom and Glory, in Jefus Christ, 1 Thess. 2.12. Worthy of his Grace in Calling; worthy of the Glory to which we are Called; that is, with the worthiness of Condecency, not of Condignity: We cannot fully answer this Grace, but we must do that which will become it.

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(4.) This Calling enableth us to be Holy, because it giveth us all things necessary both to holiness of Heart and Life. 2 Pet. 1. 3. According as his Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto Life, and Godliness, through the knowledg of him that hath called us to Glory and Vertue. Now this Grace must not lie idle, otherwise we receive the Spirit in vain.

2. The Ultimate end to obtain the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The same expression is 2 Pet. 5. 10. The God of all Grace, who hath called us to his Eternal Glory by Christ

Jesius.

Jesus. It is his Glory. Mark, 1. Here is Glory. 2. It is the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. It is Glory for Body and Souls the Glory is so great we cannot utter it, and conceive it. Now a little is revealed to us, but then it shall be revealed in us. (1.) The Soul, is not annihilated after Death, nor deth it fleep till the Refurrection; nor is it detained by the way from immediate passing into Glory; but asson as it is loosed from the Body, is admitted into God's Presence, and gathered unto the Souls of just Men made perfect; where it feeeth God, and loveth him, and enjoyeth what it feeth and loveth. For as foon as we are loosed from the Body, we are present with the Lord. And therefore the first benefit we receive in the other World, is the Salvation of the Soul. I. Pet. 1. 9. Receiving the end of your Faith, even the Salvation of your Souls. It flitteth hence to God. (2) The Body hath its glory also in due time. For when it is raised up out of the Graye, it will be another kind of Body, then we now have, both for Impassibility, Clarity, Agility. For Impaffibility, called Incorruption ; Clarity, called Glory; Agility, called Power; Subtilty, called a Spiritual Body, by the Apostle. I Cor, 15.42,43. It is fown in Corruption, it

is raised in Incorruption. It is sown in Dishohonour, it is raised in Glory: It is sown a

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Natural Body, it is raised a Spiritual Body.

1. Impaffibility doth not only exclude Corruption, for to the Bodies of the Damned are preserved for ever, but all grievances and pain. Rev. 21. 4. There shall not be any

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2. For Glory, a shining Brightness. The Righteen's shall shine as the Sun, in the Kingdom of the Father, Matth. 13. 43. Stephen's Face shone (in this Life) as it were the Face of an Angel, Acts 6, 15. And Moses his Face shone by Converse with God in the Mount, Exod. 34. 30. Our Bodies shall be likened unto his glorious Body, Phil. 3. 21. In the Transsignation, His Face did shine as the Sun, and his Rayment did shine as the Light.

3. For Vigour, Activity, and Strength. It shall always be in the height and excellency of it. God preserved Moses his matural Vigour for a long time, Deut. 34.7. but glorified Bodies shall for ever remain in an eternal "

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As Subrilty, a Spiritual Body: Here we live an animal Life, after the manner of Senfitive Creatures; maintained by Meat, Drink, Sleep: But hereafter the Body shall live after the manner of Spirits, having no need, or use of these things. There we are isosystation, as the Angels of God. Matth. 22. 30. and I Cor. 6. 19. Our Bodies are the Temple of the

Holy Ghoft. Well then, this is the Glory put upon us.

2. Why is it called the Glory of our Lord

Tefus Christ?

(1.) It is purchased by Christ; we were Redeemed, or bought by the price of his Blood, that we might attain to this Glory. Ephel I. 14. In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the forgiveness of Sins, saccording to the riches of his Grace.

(2.) It is promised by Christ. John 10. 28. I give unto them Eternal Life, and they fall never perifb: All that obey this Call have Eternal Life already begun, nay, compleated. I John 2.25. And this is the Promife, that he bath promised us, even Eternal Life.

(3.) It is Prayed for by Christ; which is a Copy of his Intercession. John 17. 14. Fathen, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me.

4. It is actually bestowed by Christ on his Followers and called People. He receiveth our departing Souls as foon as they fleet out of the Body. Acts. 7. 59. Lord Jessis, receive my Spirit. They are with him, Phil. 1.23. and 2 Cor. 5.8. when absent from the Body, they are present with the Lord: which is a mighty comfort to us. At the last day he will folemnly introduce us into Heaven. Joh. 14.3. I will come again, and receive you to my

self: that where I am, there ye may be also. The great Shepherd of the Sheep will lead the

Flock into their everlasting fold.

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5. We have not only Glory by Christ, but with Christ; we shall have the same Glory Christ now hath, but in our measure. The same Glory in kind, whereunto Christ's humanity is advanced, referring to him only his priviledg in the degree. So Rom. 8.17. And if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint-Heirs with Ghrist: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorisied together. Rev. 3. 21. To him that overcometh, will I grant, to sit with me in my Trone, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne. We share with him in his own Blessedness, so far as we are capable.

sen by God, are thus called. Election and Vocation have a great respect one to another; and though we cannot say, that none are called, that are not elected, for the Lord calleth others not only by the voice of Nature, but the Gospel. Matth. 22. 14. Many are called, but few are chosen. Yet we may say, that none are chosen, but they are in time called, so that Vocation is as it were actual Election, they

2. That all those who are elected and cho-

are often put one for another, as Joh. 15.19. I have chosen you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you: That is, called them, or pursued his choice. So I Cor. 1.26. To see your

Calling,

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Calling, Brethren, that not many wife Men after the Flesh, not many noble, not many mighty, are called; for God bath chosen the foolish things of the World, to confound the wife : and God bath chosen the weak things of the World, to confound the things which are mighty; vers. 27. as if choofing and calling were all one. So Rom. 11. 28, 29, As concerning the Goffel, they are Enemies for your Sake; but as touching the Eledion, they are beloved for the Fathers Sake: for the gifts and calling of God, are without Repentance. So that Calling is an infallible confequent of Election. And Rom. 8.30. Whom he did Predestinate, them he also Called. Reason sheweth it. 1. Effectual Calling is that powerful operation of God, wherein he beginneth to execute the purposes of his Grace. Rom. 8. 28. And we know that all things work together. for good, to them that love God, to them who are the Called according to his purpose xara ne &Deory. The first discovery of it to the Creature is by drawing us to himself. 2. This act proceedeth immediately from his Choice, asanteceding all that we can do; all worthiness of ours, or supposed worthiness. 2 Tim. 1.9. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the World began. Nothing induced God to do it, on our part, for what good thing could we do, before we were made

made good by Calling? 3. The effect doth infallibly follow, John 6.37. All that the Father hath given me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. In due time they are Called, and are obedient to the Call, Rom. 8. 28.

Uses. 1. If it be so, then here is Advice

to all.

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1. Let us apply our felves to the Means with reverence and feriousness; because God's Power is shewn in them, in converting Souls to himself. Psal. 65. 4. Bleffed is the Man whom thou choosest, and causest to draw nigh un- " to thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts. It is a good thing to be in Graces way. The Means have a ministerial efficacy. Acts 14.1. They so spake, that a great multitude of the Jews and Greeks believed. With fuch clearness and force, fo far God is with the Minister. A Dart flung by a skilful Hand, will pierce deeper than by its own weight. But yet if you can but tarry, the Hand of the Lord may be with you also, you do not know the feafons of the Lord's Grace, all are not called at the first hour; some lie long at the Pool, but yet wait still. Ere ever you are aware, the Holy Ghost may fall upon you, and open your Hearts, that Heavenly Doctrine may have its effect upon you.

2. Let us mind not only Privileges, but Duties. We have great Priviledges, we are

called

called to enjoy sweet fellowship with Christ here. I Cor.1.9. Faithful is he who bath called you, to the Communion of Christ Jesus our Lord; and to a glorious Estate hereafter. But we are also called to the Sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the Truth; and we cannot obtain the one without the other. Do not so mind Comfort, as to slight Holiness; and divide one part of your Calling from the other. Comfort is consequent to Holiness, and followeth it as heat doth Fire. The Spirit is more necessarily a Sanctifier, than a Comforter. For our duty and obedience to God, is a greater thing, than our own Peace. Holiness is the Image of God upon the Soul, and the bleffed perfection wherein we were created; Gen. 1. 27. So God created Man in his own Image. And when it was loft by Sin, Christ came and payed our Ransom, that he might renew us by his Spirit. Tit. 3.5. According to his Mercy, he faved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoft. Yea, much of our everlasting Blessedness lieth in it. For Heaven is to be looked upon not only as a state of compleat Felicity, but exact Holiness. I John 3. 2. We know that when he doth appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Ephes. 5. 27. That he might present it to himfelf a glorious Church, not kaving Spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be Holy and

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and without Blemiss. Then it is a glorious Church. Christ hath done his whole Work. Holiness is the Beauty of God himself, Exod. 15.11. and puts an Excellency on us, if we love it, and imitate it. Prov. 12.26. The Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour: But the way of the Wicked seduceth them. We do not only excel other Men, but we are more amiable in the sight of God. Prov. 11.20. The Upright is his delight. In short, it is a part of Salvation it self, and a Means to that which remaineth. Act. 26.18.—Inheritance among them which are Sanstified by Faith in Christ Jesus.

3. Let us reflect upon our selves: Have we God's Call? Have we obeyed the Gospel? This will clear up your Election to you. 2 Pet. 1. 10. Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give diligence to make your Calling and Election sure: For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. Do you find such a belief wrought in you by the Spirit, as begins in brokenness of Heart, and ends in Holiness; for Christ came to call Sinners to Repentance, Math. 9. 14. That is, Men sensible of Sin to holiness of Heart and Life, to return to God that we may first live to him, and then with him.

4. To improve the belief of the Glory promised. 1. To sweeten Obedience, or a confe of Holiness which for the present is so tedious to the Flesh. Now here is our La-

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bour, hereafter our Recompence, 1 Cor. 5.58. Every day we should grow more meet for his Glory, Gol. 1. 12. 2. To a contempt of all Worldly Things, good, or evil. If good, many are pleased with this World's good Things, but have no affection to Spiritual and Heavenly Things. Like the rebellious Ifraelites, who more defired the Onions and Garlick of Egypt, than the Milk and Honey of the Promised Land, or the Celestial Manna, Numb. 11. 5, 6. Worse than Prodigals, that rest satisfied with Husks of Swine, than Bread which is in their Father's House. They have their good Things. Now we should remember we are called off from these Things, from dreggy Contentments, base Injoyments, to the Glory of our Lord Jefus Christ. 3. The evils of the World, Crosses, Afflictions: After we have suffered a while, the God of all Grace who hath called us unto bis Eternal Giory by - Christ Jesus, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, fettle you. And 2 Tim. 2. 11, 12. It is a faithful saying : For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. Our Afflictions are both breves & leves, light and momentary. 2 Cor. 4. 17. For our light Affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory. Our sufferings are finall, if compared with the Reward: The time thort, if compared with Eternity. There

There is a two-fold Eternity, that eternal Death which the Wicked must endure ; that eternal Life which we enter into. This frould fweeten all bitter Waters. 4. To dispose and prepare us for Death. The contemplation of Immortality hath left strong impressions on the Hearts of Heathers; some Burnt themfelves, as impatient to tarry longer. If a dark view, vain hope cause this, what should a fure Promife, and Earnest of the Spirit do?

2 Use. To the Called. 1. Bless God for this Calling. The woful Estate out of which we are called, and the bleffed Estate into which we are entered; compared together, fould make us wonder. I Pet. 2. 9. Te should shew forth the Praises of lim, who hath called you out of darkness, into his marvelous Light. 2. Walk answerably, Ephel. 4. 1. I therefore, the Prisoner of the Lard, beserch you, that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called. And i Theff. 2, 12. That ye would walk worthy of God, who bath called you unto his Kingdom and Glory. . January and sound the re-

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SERMON XIII.

2 Theff. 2.15.

Therefore, Brethren, stand fast, and hold the Traditions which ye have been taught, whether by Word, or our Epistle.

THE Apostle after he had comforted the Thessalonians, he exhortest them to constancy in the Truth, what-ever temptations they had to the contrary. The Comforts he propoundest to them were taken; I. From their Election, vers. 13. 2. From their Vocation, vers. 14. His Exhortation is to Perseverance: Therefore, Brethren, &c.

In the words observe; I. The Illative Particle (Therefore); because God hath chosen you, and called you, and given you such ad-

vantages against Error and Seduction.

2. The Duty inferred, sours, stand fast; It is a Military word, you have the same in other places, I Cor. 16. 13. Watch ye, stand ye fast, &c. Ephel. 6. 14. Stand therefore, having your Loins girt about with Truth. The word intimateth Perseverance.

3. The Means of Perseverance, Hold the

Traditions which you have bin taught, whether by Word, or our Epistle.

Where observe; I. The Act. 2. The

Object.

- i. The Act REGITET, hold with strong hand; The word implyeth a forcible holding against Assaults, whether of Error or Persecution. The Thessalonians were assaulted in both kinds; the Heathens persecuted them; and some were gone abroad that began the Mystery of Iniquity, and were ready to pervert them.
- 2. The Object; which is propounded:

 1. By a common and general term, The Traditions which ye have bin taught.

 2. By a diffribution, Whether by Word, or our Epistle.

I. The common and general term, [The Traditions which ye have bin taught]; There are two forts of Traditions; Humane, and

Divine.

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First; Humane Traditions, are certain external Observances instituted by Men, and delivered from hand to hand, from Progenitors to their Posterity: These may be either besides, or contrary to the Word of God.

1. Beside the Word; as the Institutions of the Family of the Rechabites, in the observance of which, from Father to Son, they were so exact and punctual, that God produceth their example to shame the disobedience of his People; Jer. 35. 6, 7. Jonadab

the Son of Rechab our Father commanded we, faying, Te shall drink no Wine, nor build Houses, nor plant Vineyards, &c. 2. Contrary to the Word of God; such as were those of the Pharisee, Matth. 15. 2. Why transgress ye the Commandment of God by your Iraditions? Humane Inventions in Religion, are contrary to, and destructive of Divine Laws.

Secondly; Traditions Divine; Are either Heavenly Doctrines revealed by God, or Infitutions and Ordinances appointed by him for the use of the Church. These are the Rule and Ground of our Faith, Worship, and Obedience. The whole Doctrine of the Gospel, is a Tradition delivered and conveyed to us by fit Messengers, such as the Apostles were; I Cor. 11.2. Now I praise you, Brethern, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the Ordinances, [Marg. Traditions] is I delivered them to you. So that holding the Traditions, is nothing essentially but perseverance in Apostolical Doctrine.

II. The Distribution; that no Cheats might be put upon them under any pretence; therefore, he saith, Whether by Word, or our Epifile; that is, by word of Mouth, when present; or by Epistle, when absent: And he saith, not Epistles, but Epistle, as alluding to the former wrote unto them: They were bound to yield to both alike credence and obedience; for whether in speaking or writing.

writing, the Apostolical Authority was the same. To improve this Verse for your benefit, I shall lay down several Propositions.

I. That what-ever affurance we have of God's preserving us in the Truth, yet we are bound to use Diligence and Caution.

II. Our Diligence and Caution is to be employed about this, That we may stand fast in the Faith of Christ, and the Profession and Practice of Godlines.

III. That the Means of standing fast in the Faith of Christ, and the Profession and Practice of Godlines, is by holding the Traditions which were taught by the Holy Apostles.

IV. That while the Apostles were in being, there were two ways of delivering the Truth, by word of Mouth, and Writing.

V. That now when they are long fince gone to God, and we cannot receive from them the Doctrine of Life by Word of Mouth; We must stick to the Scriptures or written Word.

L That what-ever assurance we have of God's preserving us in the Truth, yet we are bound to use Diligence and Caution: For the Apostle had said, That God had chosen Dd 4.

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and called them to the belief of the Truth; and yet faith, Therefore, Brethren, stand fast.

First; Reason will tell us, That when we intend an End, we must use the Means, otherwise the bare intention and desire would suffice; And to the accomplishing of any effect, we need no more than to will it; And the Sluggard would be the wisest Man in the World, who is full of wishings and wouldings, though his hands resuse to labour; but common experience sheweth, that the End cannot be obtain'd without a diligent use of the means. Prov. 13. 4. The Soul of the Sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the Soul of the Diligent shall be made fat; that is, rewarded with the intended benefit.

Secondly; The Business in hand is, Whether God's Election, Calling, or Promise, doth so secure the End to us, as that we need not be so careful in the diligent use of Means. Such a notion or conceit there may be in the Hearts of Men, therefore let us attaque it a little by these Considerations,

I. God's Decree is both of End and Means, for all his Purposes are executed by fit Means. He that hath chosen us to Salvation, bringeth it about by the belief of the Truth, and sanctification of the Spirit. 2 Thess. 2. 13. and without Faith and Holiness no Man shall see God, and escape condemnation. God had assured Paul, That there should be no loss of any Mans

Mans Life among them, except of the Ship, Acts 27. 22. And yet afterwards, verf. 21. Paul telleth them, Except these abide in the Ship, ye cannot be faved. How could that Affurance given to Paul from God, and Paul's Caution to the Mariners stand together? Doth the Purpose of God, depend upon the uncertain Will and Actions of Men? I Anfwer, Not as a Cause, from whence it receiveth its force and strength, but as a Means, appointed also by God to the execution of his Decree. For by the same Decree God appointeth the Event, what he will do, and the Means by which he will have it to be done: And the Lord revealing by his Word this conjunction of end and Means, there is a necessity of Duty lying upon Man to use these Means, and not to expect the End without them. God intended to fave all in the Ship, and yet the Mariners must abide in the Ship; therefore what God hath joined together, let no Man separate: If we separate these things, God doth not change his Counfel, but we pervert his Order to our own Destruction.

2. God that hath bidden us to believe his Promifes, hath forbidden us to tempt his Providence, Mat.4.7. Now we tempt God, when we defire him to give an extraordinary proof of his care over us, when ordinary Means will ferve the turn, or be useful to us.

3. Though

3. Though the Means feem to have no connexion with the End, yet if God hath injoined them for that end, we must use them; As in the instance of Naaman, God was refolved to cure him; but Naaman must take his prescribed way, though against his own fancy and conceit; 2 King. 5. 10. Wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean : compare vers. 13. If the Prophet had bidden thee to do some great thing, &c. So John 13. 6, 7. Peter must submit to be washed, though he could not see the benefit of it. So John 9. 6, 7. The blind Man must submit to have his Eyes anointed with Clay, and wash in the Pool of Siloam; though the Clay seemed to put out his Eyes, rather than cure them; And the Pool could not wash away his blindness: but means appointed by God must be used, what-ever improbabilities are apprehended by us.

4. That when God's Will is expresly declared concerning the Event, yet he will have the means used: As for instance, 2 Kings 20, 5, 6, 7. God was absolutely resolved to add sisteen years more to Hezekiah's Life, yet he must take a lump of Figs and lay it on the Boil: which plainly sheweth that no promise on God's part, nor assurance on ours, hindreth the use of means; God will work by

them, not without them.

5. In Spiritual Things, affurance of the Event is an incouragement to Industry, not a pretence to Sloth; I John 2.27, 28. To shall abide in him; and now, little Children, abide in him. The promise of Perseverance doth incourage us to use endeavours that we may persevere, and quicken Diligence, rather than nourish Security, or open a gap to carnal Liberty; I Cor. 9. 26. I run not as one that is uncertain: We are the more earnest, because we are affured the means shall not be unessection.

II. Prop. Our Duty is to stand fast in the Faith of Christ, and profession of Godliness, what-ever temperations we have to the contrary: [stand fast] being a Military word, it alludeth to a Souldier's keeping his Ground; and is apposed to two things; 1. A cowardly Flight; 2. A treacherous Revolt.

1. A cowardly Flight, implyeth our being overcome in the evil Day, by the many Affictions that befal us for the Truths fake; Ephel. 6.13. Wherefore take to you the whole Amour of God, that you may be able to withfand in the evil Day; that after ye have done all things, ye may stand. Their Temptation, was the many troubles and persecutions that befal them, called there the Evil Day. Their desence lay in the whole Armour of God; which is there made of six pieces, The Girdle

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dle of Truth or Sincerity, which is a strength to us as a Girdle to the Loins; The Breaftplate of Righteousness, or an holy inclination and defire to perform our Duty to God in all things; And the Shield of Faith, or a stedfast adhering to the Truths of the Gospel, whether delivered in a way of Command, Promife, or Threatning; The Helmet of Hope, or a certain and defirous expectation of the promised Glory; The Shoe of the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, which is a readiness to endure all encounters for Christ's fake, who hath made our Peace with God; And the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Now if we take this Armour, and use it in our Conflicts, what doth it serve for? to withstand and stand; The first is the Act of a Souldier; the second is the posture of a Conqueror: Here is withstanding till the Field be won, and then standing when the Day of Evil is over. Here we make our way to Heaven by Conflict and Conquest; and hereafter we triumph.

2. A treacherous Revolt, or yielding to the Enemy, by complying with those things which are against the Interest of Christ and his Kingdom for advantage-sake; 2 Tim. 4.

10. Demas hath forsaken us, and loved the present World. Back-sliders in Heart are the worst fort of Apostates, such as lose their affection to God, and delight in his ways, and esteem

efteen not of his glorious Recompences, for a little Pleasure, Profit, or Pomp of Living, sell their Birth-right for one morsel of Meat, Heb. 12. 15, 16. Some fail in their Understandings, but most miscarry by the perverse inclination of their Wills; they are carnal worldly Hypocrites, that never throughly mortified the fleshly Mind; prize things as they are commodious to the Flesh, and will save them from Sufferings. The byass of such Mens Hearts doth easily prevail against the Light of their Understandings.

III. Prop. The Means of standing fast, is, by holding the Traditions which were taught by the Holy Apostles. Here I will prove; I. That the Doctrine of Christianity taught by the Apostles is a Tradition. 2. That holding this Tradition by strong hand, when others wrest it from us, is the means of our Perseverance.

Tradition, I prove it by two Arguments; First, Matters not evident by the Light of Nature, nor immediately revealed to us by God, must be either an Invention or a Tradition; an Invention is something in Religion not evident by natural Light, nor agreeable to sound Reason, but is some cunningly devised Fable, invented by one or more, and obtruded by various Artisices upon the belief

of the World. Inventions in this kind were Man's Disease, not his Remedy , Eccles, 29. God made Man upright, but they sought out many Inventions. As when the Philosophers fat abrood upon Religion, a goodly Chimera it was they hatched and brought forth ! Rom. 1. 21, 22. They became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkned; and professing themselves to be wife, they became Fools. The Inventions little became the Nature of God; nor were they profitable to Man, for still the great Sore of Nature was unhealed, which is a fear of Death, and the righteous Wrath of God, Rom. 1. 32. So that neither Man's Comfort nor Duty was well provided for. Surely the Gospel is none of this fort, not an Invention of Men, but a Revelation of God; and a Revelation not made to us in Person, but brought out of the Bolom of God, by Jefus Christ, and by him manifested to chosen Witnesses, who thight publish this Mystery and Secret to others. Well then, fince the Gospel is not an Invention, it is a Tradition, or a delivery of the Truth upon the Testimony of one that came from God, to instruct the World, or reduce it to him! not an Invention of Man, but a Secret brought out of the Bolom of God, by our Lord Jefus Christ. Therefore 'tis faid, Heb. 2.3, 4. How shall we escape if we neglets so great Salvation, first spoken by the Lord him felf,

Self, and then confirmed to us by them that heard bim; The Lord bearing them witnest, &cc. Christ delivered it to the Apostles, and the Apostles delivered it to others; 2 Tim. 2, 2. Those things which thou hast keard from me among many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faith-ful Men, who shall be able to teach others also. The Apostles received the Gospel from Christs and the Churches and Ministers from the Apostles; and they delivered it down to others until it came to us; which is the Means of our believing the Truth, and confessing the Name of Christ. This Testimony delivered and conveyed to us by the most credible means, and which we have no reafon to doubt of, is as binding, as if we had heard Christ and his Apostles in Person: For we have their word in writing, though we did not hear them preach and publish it with the lively Voice; their Authority is the fame delivered either way. And that these are their Writings, appeareth by the constant Tradition of the Church, and the acknowledgment of Friends, and Enemies, who still appeal to them as a public authentic Record: And as they have bin attefted by the Church, they have bin owned by God, and bleffed by him to the Conversion and Sanctifying of many Souls throughout all fuspellions of Ages: And by this Tradition Christianity bath held up the Head against all encounters of

of Time, and the perfecutions of Adverse Powers have not suppressed it; nor the difputes of Enemies filenced the Profession of it; but from Age to Age it hath bin received, and transmitted to future Generations, tho fometimes at a very dear rate. And this to binding to us, though we faw not the Perfons, and Miracles by which they confirmed their Message, and heard not the first report Yet the Universal Tradition having handed it to us, is a fufficient ground of Faith; and fo we believe through their Word, and are concerned in Christ's Prayers, John 17. 20. For with them and their Successors (as to these necessary things) Christ hath promised to be to the end of the World, Matth. 28.

2. My next Argument is; Because Christian Religion must needs be a Tradition, partly because matter of Fact is the Foundation of it, and it is in it self matter of Fact; That the Son of God came from God; to bring us to God; that is to say, appear'd in humane Nature, instructed the World by his Doctrine and Example, and at length died for Sinners, confirming both in Life and Death the truth of his Mission, by such unquestionable Miracles as shewed him to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World. Now a Testimony, Tradition, or Report,

is needfary in matters of Fact, which of necellity must be confined to some determinate time and place. It was not fit that Christ should be always working Miracles, always dying, always rifing, and afcending in every place, and in the view of every Man; but chose things were to be once done in one place of the World, in fight of some partiadar and competent Witnesses: But because the knowledg of them concerned all the rest of the World, they were by them to be attested to others; Matters of Fact can only be proved by credible Witnesses, and this was the great Office put upon the Apostles; Auri. 8, 21, 22. and Ads 2. 32. Ads 3. 15. faith, or the Doctrine built upon this Matter of Fact: We cannot properly be faid to beleve a thing but upon a report and testimoby: I may know a thing by fenfe or reason; but I cannot believe it, but as it is affirmed or brought to me by credible Testimony. we are faid to fee those things, which we perprive by the Eye, or the fenfe of Seeing; and to know those things which we receive by Bealon, or fure Demonstration; so we are faid to believe those things which are brought to us by valuable Testimony, Tradition, and Report. As for Instance, if any one ask you, Do you believe the Sun thineth at noon Day? You will answer, I do not believe it;

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but see it. So if any one ask you, Do you believe that twice two make four, and twice three make fix? You will fay, I do not be lieve it, but know it, because certain and evident Reason telleth me, that two is the half of four, and three of six; and every whole confifteth of two halfs or moities But if he thould ask you, Do you believe that the Sun is bigger than the Earth? You will say, I believe it; for though your Eye doth not discover it, nor doth an ignorant Man know any certain demonstration of it; yet having the authority of Learned Men, who are competent Judges in the case, you judg it a rash and foolish obstinacy not to be lieve it. Apply it now to the Mysteries of Godliness revealed in the Gospel, they cannot be seen with the Eye, for they are invisi-ble; nor found out and comprehended by any humane understanding, because they exceed the reach of Man's Reason, and depend upon the Love and Arbitrary Will of God, John 3. 16. yet you believe them, because God hath revealed them to the Prophets and Apostles: And God being Truth and Wifdom it felf, cannot deceive, or be deceived; and therefore you believe them with the certainty of Divine Faith, and do no more doubt of them, than you do of those things which you see with your Eyes, and know and understand by a fure demonstration

tion. The sense of Seeing may be deceived, and Humane Reason may erre 5 but 'tis impossible God should deceive, or be deceived. It oftentimes falleth out, that Men do prefer the authority and report of a Man whom they judg to be Wife and Good, before their own Sense and Reason. As for Instance: That Man who by his Eye judges the Sun to be less than the Earth, yet doth not obstinately stand in his Opinion, when he hears a knowing and skilful Philosopher affert the contrary. Now, If we receive the witness of Men, the Witness of God is greater, I John 9. And this Testimony of God is brought to us, by his Authorized Messengers, as the ground of Faith: And what is that but Tradition? We believe in God by hearing of him, and we hear by a Preacher, Rom. 10.14. Ordinary common Preachers give us notice, but Christ and his Apostles give us assurance; and by their Testimony and Tradition, our Faith is ultimately resolved into the veracity of God.

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2. That holding this Tradition is the great means of standing fast in the Faith of Christ, and the Confession of his Name. For in the Word of God delivered by Christ, and his Apostles, there is sure Direction to walk by; and sure Promises to build upon. For whatever they made known of Christ was not a Fable, but a certain Truth; for they had the Testismonty

mony of Senie, 2 Pet. 1.16,17. 1 John 1.2,3%. and fo could plead both the Authority of his Command, and the certainty of his Promife, and that with uncontroulable Evidence; and without this relation, there can be neither Faith, nor Obedience, nor fure expectation of Happinels. For we cannot truft God for what he hath not Promifed no obey God in what he hath not Commanded nor in our Difficulties and Distresses, exped Happiness from him without his Warrant and Affurance. But by this Doctrine delivered to us, we have all that belongeth to Faith, Obedience, and Happiness; and beyond that the Creature can defire no more. 1. There can be no Faith till we have a fure Testimony of God's Revelation; for Faith is a believing such things as God hath Revealed, because he hath Revealed them. The not Faith but Fancy, to believe fuch things as God hath never Revealed; nor is it trult and a regular confidence to think, that he will certainly give us what he hath never promifed; this were to lay us open to all manner of Delulion: And therefore we are never upon fure and ftable ground, but by fticking to fuch a Tradition, as may justly intitle it fel to God. 2. Nor Obedience; for Obedience is a doing what God bath Commanded, because he hath Commanded it. The fundamental reason of Obedience, is the fight of God's

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God's Will, 1 Theff. 4. 3; 1 Theff. 5.18. 1 Pet. 2. 15. To do what God never Commanded, or not to do it upon that account, but for other reasons, is not Obedience; and in difficult cases the Soul can never be held to in Duty, till we are perswaded that so is God's Will concerning us. Now to know his Will concerning us; we are, often bidden to fearch the Scripture; but never bidden to confult with the Church, to know what unwritten Traditions She hath in her keeping to instruct us in our Duty. 3. No certain expectation of Happiness. We are never fale till we know by what Rule Christ will de us, that is, reward or punish Men at the last Day; Now he will judg us according to the Gospel, Rom. 2, 16, 1 Theff. 1. 8. Obey the Golpel, and you have a perfect Rule to guide you to Happinels; but if you neglect this great Salvation, or be unfathful in the profession of it, this Word condemneth you, and God will ratifie the Sentence of it.

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IV. Prop. That whilf the Apostles were in being; there were two ways of delivering the Truth, and that is by word of Mouth, and Writing. So in the Text, Whether by Word, or our Epitile. The Apostles went up and down, and preached Christ every where a that needeth no Proof, unless you would have me to produce the whole Book of the Apostless But they did not Preach

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only,

only, but Write, and both by the Instinct of the Holy Spirit, who guided their Journeys, and moved them to write Epiftles: For being often absent from Churches newly Planted, and Herefies arifing, or some Contentions, which could not be avoided among weak Christians, God over-ruled these occaflons for the profit of the Church in after Ages; upon one occasion or another, they faw a necessity to write avayem igor. Jude ver. 3. It was needful for me to write unto you. As in the Old Testament, God himself delivered the Law with great Majesty and Terrour, and afterwards caused the same to be written in Tables of Stone, for the constant use of his People. And the Prophets first uttered their Prophecies, and then wrote unto them: So the Apostles first preached Evangelical Doctrine, and then configned it to writing for the Use of all Ages. And though all things delivered by them were not delivered in one Sermon, or one Epistle; yet by degrees the Canon of the New Testament was Constituted, and made perfect by the Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles.

V. Prop. That now when they are long fince gone to God, and we cannot receive from them the Doctrine of Life by word of Mouth, we must stick to the Scriptures, or written Word. 1. Because we are taught

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to do fo by Christ and his Apostles. Christ always appealeth to the Writings of the Old Teltament, both against Traditions, which he condemneth, Matth. 15, 2. and against pretended Revelations; Luke 16. 31. If iber bear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will be persuaded to repent, if one should come from the Dead. And the Apostles still have recourse to this Proof, Acts 26.22. Witnessing so other things than the Prophets and Moses did fay should come to pass. And when they pleaded they were Eye and Ear-witnesses, and so their Testimony was valuable; yet they say ye have Behaustreen hoyor, a surer Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye shall do well to take beed, 2 Pet. 1. 19. Now how can we do better than to imitate these great Examples? 2. Because those things were written for our 1 John 1.4. These things write we unto you, that your foy may be full. The Apostles being to leave the World, did know the flipperiness of Man's Memory, and the danger of corrupting Christian Doctrine, if there were not a fure authentick Record left; therefore they wrote, and so fully, that no-thing is wanting to compleat our Joy and Happinels. 3. Because the Scriptures are perfect. The perfection of Scripture is known by its End, and intended Use, which is to give us a knowledg of those things which concern our Faith, Duty, and Happiness. Ee 4

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1, Our Faith in Christ. If there be enough written for that end, we need not unwritten Traditions, to complear our Rufe. Now St. John telleth us, he might have written more things. But thefe things are written that ye might believe in the Son of God, and have Life through his Name, John 20. 30, 31. Certainly, nothing is wanting to beget a Faith in Christ: The Object is sufficiently propounded; the Warrant, or Claim, is laid down in the New Covenant; and the encouragements to believe it are clear and from What would Men have more? So that here is a perfect Rule, perfect in its kind, and for its proper use 2. For our Duty: That is fufficiently provided for. The Apostle telleth us, that the Grace of God (take it objectively for the Grace of the Gospel, or subjectively for the Grace of the Gospel of the Gospel of the Grace of the Gospel of the Gos jectively for Grace in our Hearts) teacheth s; If you mean Objective Grace, it preferibeth, directeth: If Subjective Grace, it perfuadeth and exciteth what to do: To live Soberly, Righteensly, Godly in the present World, Tit. 2.12. There are all the branches of Man's Duty enumerated: Sobriety relateth to self-government; Righteously to our carriage towards our Neighbour; Godly to our Commerce and Communion with God. What is there wanting that belongeth either to Worthip, or Justice, or Personal Holiness? Therefore certainly we need no other Rule;

freit layeth down whatfoever Men are bound to do in all Ages and places of the World, and in Whatfoever Circumfances God thall pur them; And fo it is fit to be the Law of the Universal Ring, and Law giver yes, is is to perfect, that whatever other Way is fee up, it preferally duliteth against those Morion that we have, or mould have of God. his Service, and Worthips or it infingeth, or perverteth the Liberty and Nature of Man. For our Happinels That Doct and and inflictation, which is little to make its make in to Salvation, is enough for us, but to the holy Scriptures are fail to do. " " Timila. rg. And that from a Child thou haft known the boly Swiptures, which are able to make thee wife was but at the found the Faith which is in Christ Jesse. Nay, afterwards, Ver. 17. The Man God is by them made perfect, and throughly furnified to every good Work.

If the Scriptures do throughly direct Men

If the Scriptures do throughly direct Men to know God in Christ, and fave derrown Souls, why should we look any further? Now they do not only furnish every private Christian with this Knowledg; but the Man of God, who is to Instruct others, he needeth look no further, but is furnished out of the Scripture with all things necessary to discharge his Office. Therefore here we fix and rest, we have a sufficient Rule, and a full Record of all necessary Christian Doctrine.

Use I.

Ufe it. The Use of all is : Let us not feek another Rule than the Word of God. Pa piles cry up unwritten Traditions, to be received with equal respect and reverence, as we receive the holy Scriptums. But you Brethren, fland falt, holding the Apoltolica Tradition: You cannot have it by word of Mouth from them now; therefore you multiplied to what is Written, or elfe you cannot preferve your felves from the Frauds and Impoltures of Antichrift. These Apostolical Writings have been received in all Ages, and Times of the Church, from the Beginning; and all Disputes among Christians have been tried by them: None were allowed good or fincere Christians, who doubted of the truth of them. But because we have to do with a People that will facrifice all to the honour and interest of their Church, and knowing they are not able to fland before the Light of Scriptures, have, to the no little prejudice of the Christian Cause, done all they can to weaken the Authority, Sufficiency, and Perspicuity of them, that we might have no Religion without the Testimony and Recommendation of their Church; therefore I shall resume the Matter and declare it asresh.

1. Mankind lying in Darkness, and in the shadow of Death, it was necessary that one way or another, God should reveal his Mind to them; that we may have what belongeth to

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our Duty and Happinels, for our chief good and last end. Being altered by Sin, we strangely mistake things, and put Light for Darknels, and Darknels for Light, Good for Evil, and Evil for Good; weighing all things in the ballance of the Flesh, which we seek to please. We confound both the names and natures of Things, and wander in a maze of thousand Perplexities; therefore God in pity to Mankind, bath given us a fure direction in his Word, which is a Lamp and our Feet, and a Light unto our Paths, Pal. 119. ios. Mark the words of Light and Lamp; the use of a Lamp is by Night, and in the Day we have the Light of the Sun s whether it be Day or Night with us, here we are taught how to carry our felves. Mark again the words of Pab and Fee: The one figniffeth our Way, and general Course; the other all our particular Actions; fo far as Religion is concerned in them, we have directions in the Word about them. Belides, Man's condition is fuch, that he needeth a Supernatural Remedy by a Redeemer; which depending upon the meer Love and See Grace of God, cannot be found out by Natural Light left to us; for that only can judg of things necessary, but not of such things as depend upon the meer Pleasure of God; therefore a Divine Revelation there must

2. Since it is necessary that God should fome way or other reveal his Mind to his People; it must be done by Oracles, Visions, Dreams, or by extraordinary Messengers, who by word of Mouth might convey it to us: Or else by Writing, or by ordinary Teachers, whose Lips may preserve Knowledg in the Church. The former ways might fuffice while God faw fit, to reveal but a few Truths, and fuch as do not burden the Memory, and Men were long-liv'd, and of great Simplicity, and the Church was confined within a small compass of Ground, and not liable to fo many Miferies and Changes. as now in the latter Ages; but when once God had spoken to us by his Son, those extraordinary Ways ceased. Heb. 1,1,2, God who at fundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past to the Fathers by the Prophets; bath in these last Times spaken to us by his Son. As formerly God did speak TEAUTPOwas, in divers manners: That is to fay, by Visions, Oracles, Dreams; and so molywees, at fundry times, by feveral Steps and Degrees, he acquainted the World with the Truths necessary for Man to know, delivering them out by Portions, not altogether at once, till he came who had the Spirit without measure, John 3. 34. The Prophets to whom God revealed himself before, by Visions, Oracles, Dreams, or the coming of the Spirit upon them.

them, had the Spirit, ou weter, by measure, to fit them for some particular Errand, or Mellage, on which God fent them. when God fent his Son out of his Bosom to reveal the whole Doctrine of Faith at once. and to declare his Fathers Will with full Authority and Power, he fixed and closed up the Rule of Fairh. So twas not fit that after him there should come any extraordinary Nuncio's and Embassadors from Heaven, or any other should be owned as Infallible Meffengers, but fuch as he immediately fent abroad in the World to disciple the Nations. Therefore all former extaordinary ways ceased, and we are left to the ordinary Rule stated by Christ.

3. Being left to the ordinary Rule, it was necessary it should be taught, not only by word of Mouth, but committed to Writing: For Christ is ascended into Heaven, and the Apostles do not live for ever; and we have no Men now that are immediately and divinely inspired: And ordinary Pastors and Teachers, cannot make more Articles of Faith, but do only build on the Apostles Foundation, 1 Cor. 3. 10. or that divinely impired Doctrine which they delivered to the Church: Yea, that Doctrine cannot well be preferved from oblivion and corruption, without writing. Therefore God accounted this the fafest way, those things that are only deli-

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delivered by word of mouth, or from hand to hand, may eafily be changed, corrupted. or utterly loft. Certainly if you confider Man's Sloth, Treachery, Levity, and the many vile Affections which may eafily induce him to extinguish, or corrupt the Truth which is contrary to them; you will fee that it is necessary there should be an Authentic Record, by which Truth and Error might be tried and distinguished. Yea, that the Church which is dispersed throughout the World, might have Truth at hand, and perticular Believers have this Doctrine ever by them for their comfort and use; it being the property of a Bleffed Man, to delight in the Law of God, and to exercise himself therein day and night, Pfal. 1.2. In thort, while the Apostles were living, twas good to take the Tradition from their Mouth; but now they are dead, we take it from their Writings. Surely if God faw fome Writing necessary, when those extraordinary ways (we spake of before) were in use, and the Church of the Old Testament was in a much quieter estate than the Church of the New: I say, if fome writing were necessary then, it is more necessary now, for the Christian Church is more exposed to dreadful storms of Persecution, the deceits of Heretics of all forts, especially to the frauds of Antichrift, which we are forewarned of in this Chapter, and are detected

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detected and discovered by their contrariety to the written Word.

4. This Truth being written, it is both a fafe and a full Rule for us to walk by: It is a fafe Rule, because it is written by the Apofiles and Evangelifts, holy Men moved by the Holy Ghost. The Apostles did not lose their Infallibility, when they committed what they preached to writing: the same Spirit that affifted them in delivering the Doctrine by word of mouth, affifted them also when they delivered it by writing. And it is a full and sufficient Rule, because it containeth all things which are necessary for Men to believe and do, in order to Eternal Life. Let them name what is necessary, beyond what is recommended there, or may be delivered from thence. Yea, it doth contain, not only all the Essential, but also the Integral parts of the Christian Religion; and therefore nothing can be any part of our Religion which is not there. The Direction of old was, Ifa. 8. 20. To the Law, and to the Testimony; if they fleak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them. Every thing was then tried by Moses and the Prophets; every thing must be now tried by the Prophets and Apostles, which is our Foundation of Faith, Worship, and Obedience, Ephes. 2. 20.

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5. That which we blame in the Papists, is,

That they cry up a private, unproved, unwritten Tradition of their own, as of equal authority with this fafe and full Rule, which is contained in this written Word of God. Their Crime and Fault may be confidered partly with respect to the Object and Matter that these Traditions are not indifferent Cuftoms, but effential Points necessary to Faith and Christian practice: And so though Christian be never to thorow and found in his obedience to the Word of God, and true to the Baptismal Covenant, yet if he submitteth not to these unwritten Traditions, he wants some Point necessary to Faith and Practice, and fo to Life eternal: which is contrary to Mark 16. 16. He that believeth, and is has tized, shall be faved; and he that believeth not shall be damned. And John 17.3. This is Life Eternal, to know thee the only true God, and fefus Christ whom then hast sent. Partly as to the Subject, as they make their own Faction to be the only keepers of these things; and that nothing is to be owned as Apostolical Tradition, but what is delivered as such by their Authority; which is to leave the Church to the tyranny and usurpation of a corrupt Faction; to declare for Apoltolical Tradition any thing which serveth their end and Intereft, and for which no true historical Exidence is produced. Now the unjust and fraudulent practices which they have used, to promote 201

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promote this usurpation over the Churches of Christ, render them falle Men, most unfit to he trusted in this kind. Partly with respect to the Manner, they will have these things to be received, pari reverentia & pietatis affectin, with the same reverence and pious affection with which we receive the Holy Scriptures; and fo Man's Post is fet by God's, and unproved Traditions equall'd with Doctrines of Their Opinion is bad enough; but meir Practice is worse; for there they shew they value these things more than the Scriphires. As Superstition always aboundeth in wown things. Did ever any of their Dodors fay the same things of Traditions, which they take the boldness to say of Scripmre? Did they ever call them Pen and Inktorn, or Parchment Divinity, a nose of Wax; dumb Rule, an obscure and ambiguous Doaffine? These Blasphemies they vent boldly mainft the Scriptures: but did they ever spake thefe of Traditions? And again, their common People are a thousand times better in2 Aructed in their Traditions, than in the Do-Grine of Salvation. They skill more of Lent; and Ember-weeks, &c. than they truly underhand the Doctrine of Man's Mifery and Remedy. And call you this Reverence and pious Affection to the Scriptures and Tradinons? Partly because they would never give is a Catalogue of unwritten Traditions, net Ff cellary

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ceffary to be observed by all Christians; It may be lest they should amaze the People with the multitude of them, or else that the People may not know how many of their Doctrines are destitute of Scripture proof, and so they plainly be discovered to be Imposers on the belief of the Christian World.

6. Though we blame this in Papists, yet

we reject not all Traditions;

I. Because Scripture it self is a Tradition as we proved before, and is conveyed to to by the most credible means, which we have no reason to doubt of. The Scriptures of the Old Testament were preserved by the Iews, to whom were committed the Oracle of God, Rom. 3. 2. Protestants received all the Books which they admitted into their Canon. And for the Books of the New Tellament, the Christian Church hath received them, as the Writings of those whose names they bear. And by the constant Universal Tradition of the Church they are transmitted to us; and we have no more reason to doubt of them, than we do of Statutes and Laws made by Kings and Parliaments, who lived long before we had a being. Yea, we may be much more confident, as the Matter is of greater weight and consequence, and these Writings have the signature and stamp of God's Spirit on them, and have bin bles fed by God, to the converting and fanctify-

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ing of many Souls: And have bin delivered down to us by a succession of Believers unto this very day: And by them Christianity hath bin preserved in the World, notwithstanding the wickedness of it, and hath held up head against all the encounters of Time. The persecutions of Adverse Powers have not suppressed it, nor the disputes of Enemies silenced the profession of it; but still from Age to Age God's Truth is received and trans-

mitted to Posterity.

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2. Because the truth of Christianity depending upon Matter of Fact, chiefly Christ's rifing from the Dead, it can only be proved by a Testimony; which in so extraordinary a case, must be made valuable, and authorized to the World by the Miracles accompanying it. Now the notice of these things is brought to us by Tradition, which being unquestionable, giveth us as good ground of Faith, as it did to them that lived in the Apoftles Time, and heard their Doctrine, and law their Miracles. God's wonderful Works were never intended for the benefit of that Age only in which they were done; but for the benefit also of those that should hear of them, by any credible means whatfoever, Pfal. 145.4. Joel 1.3. Pfal. 78.3,4,5,6,7. thefe things were told them that they might fet their hope in God, &c.

3. Because there are some Doctrines drawn by just consequence from Scripture, but are the more consirmed to us, when they are backed with constant Church usage and practice; as Baptism of Infants, Lord's Day, singing of Psalms in our Public Worship, &c.

4. Because there are certain words which are not found in Scripture indeed, yet agreeable thereto, and are very useful to discover the frauds of Heretics, as Trinity, Divine Providence, consubstantial procession of the Ho-

ly Ghost, Satisfaction, &c.

5. We reject not all Church-History, or the Records of Ancient Writers concerning the Providences of God in their Days, in owning the Gospel; which make much for our instruction in Manners, and help to incou-

rage us to put our trust in God.

6. There are certain Usages, and innocent Customs, or Circumstances, common to Sacred and other Actions, which we despise not, but acknowledg and receive as far as their own variable Nature and Condition requireth; not rejecting them, because anciently practised; nor regarding them, when the general Law of Edification requireth the omission of them. But that which we detest, is, that the Traditions of Men should be made equal in dignity and authority with the express Revelation of God: Yea, that manifest Corruptions and Usurpations, as making Rome

Rome the Mistress of other Churches, and fuperinducing the Pope as the Head of the Universal Visible Church, and the Vicar of Christ, without his leave and appointment, and such-like other Points, should be obtruded upon the World as Apostolical Traditions, and to be received with like religious reverence, as we do Articles of Faith set down in Scripture: This is that we cannot sufficiently abhor, as apparently false, and destructive to Christianity.

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SERMON XIV.

2 Theff. 2. 16, 17.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and given us everlasting Consolation, and good hope through Grace; comfort your Hearts, and stablish you in every good Word and Work.

The Apostle, 1. Giveth thanks for their Election, and Vocation, Ver. 13, 14.

2. Exhorteth them to stick fast to the Truths delivered by Epistles, or word of

Mouth, Ver. 15.

3. Prayeth for them, in the words now read: So that is the third means of confirming their Faith in the Truth of the Gospel. (Prayer to God for them). Now in a Prayer all things are plain; we must put off our Shoes when we draw nigh to God, appear before the Lord with naked and bare Feet: Therefore here nothing of difficulty will occur; our Prayers the more simply and plainly they are exprest, the more sincere they are.

In this Prayer observe,

I. The Persons to whom this Prayer is addressed; Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father.

II. The Grounds of Audience, and success are intimated, which are two, 1. God's Love, which bath loved ws. 2. The Pledges of his Love; which are also two, 1. Without us. 2. Within us.

1. He hath given us everlasting Conso-

2. Good hope through Grace.

III. The Bleffings prayed for.

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I. Increase of Comfort, comfort your Hearts.

2. Perseverance, or Establishment; And stablish you in every good Word and Work: Where, by every good Word, is meant the sound Doctrine of the Gospel, by every good Work holines of Life.

So that here is a great harvest of Matter, but we must gather it in by degrees; for all

cannot be spoken of at once.

First, We begin with the Persons to whom the Prayer is addressed, Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father. That is, I beseech the Lord, our Saviour, and God our Father, to comfort and stablish you. The Observations for this Branch shall be brief and short, because the proper seat of them lieth else-where.

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I. That Exhortations prevail little without Prayer. He had exhorted them to hold faft the Traditions, and presently addeth, Our Lord Tefus Christ, and God the Father Stablish you, in every good Word and Work. It is good to observe, how all the parts of the Apostle's Discourse cohere, and agree togetheri He first blesseth God for their Election, and then sheweth how it is accomplished by Vocation, or Effectual Calling: Yet the effectually Called need Quickning and Exhortation, that we may concur to our Salvation in that way which is proper to us. But left the bufines should seem wholly to rest upon our Will, he carrieth up the Matter to God again by Prayer: Election doth not exclude God's Means, which is Vocation, nor Man's means, which is Exhortation; but that availeth little, unless the Matter be brought before God again by Prayer.

Now this Method is necessary.

1. Because all from first to last come from God, he is Alpha and Omega, First and Last, all Things are from him, through him, and to him. The business began with God in his Election, and is still carried on through God, not only by Effectual Calling, but actual Assistance, which giveth Success and Blessing, and then the Glory of all redoundeth to him.

2. Because what cometh from God, must

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be fought of God. Ezek. 36.37. I will yet for this be enquired of by the House of Israel, to do it for them. Compared with the 26 Vers. A new Heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you. We must express our defires to God for things agreeable to his Will, for God will not force Spiritual Blessings upon us, nor give them to us, unless we defire them: Some things he gave us unasked, and without our defire, consent, or knowledg, as a Mediator, a New Covenant, or effers of Grace, yea, the first gift of the Spirit; but in other things we are obliged to ask.

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3. A great part of Man's Duty dependeth on Prayer feriously performed: There is nothing so conducible to the maintaining of Communion between us and God, as a daily sence of our Emptiness, and God's both Fulness and readiness to supply all our Wants.

1. That it is so, that we are empty, and God is All-sufficient, otherwise there would not be a foundation for Practical Godliness. That we are empty, John 15. 5. Without me se can do nothing: Not only nihil Magnum, but Nihil. So 2 Cor. 3. 5. Not that we are sufficient of our selves, to think any thing as of our selves, for our sufficiency is of God. That is, we are not able to think any thing in order to the Conversion of other Men, or our selves; we cannot imagin to enter upon this design

design without any hope of success without God. That there is a Fulness in God to supply all our Wants. Ephel. 3. 20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above what we can ask, or think: that is, above what we can imagine and pray for. If any Man feriously address himself to any serious Business, he is full of Imaginations may it be effected, yea, or no? Alas, God outworketh their Thoughts and Prayers, and doth things which never entred into our Hearts to conceive: That there is a Readiness in God to supply all our Wants, otherwife our Prayers would be little encouraged, and be dead in the Mouth. Now James 1. 5. If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not. You need not make scruple, or be ashamed to consult with God upon every occasion; for he is ready, and hath not a confined Bounty like ours, who waste by giving, and give from our felves, what we impart to others.

2. That without this, Communion with God would be interrupted, and all Religion would die and languish. For if we had the Stock in our Hands, we would forget, and forsake our Father; but when still we must be enabled by God to every good Work, and we cannot have it unless we acknowledg Him, and seek it of him by Prayer. This keepeth

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up a sensible dependance of the Creature upon God; this Dependance begets Observance, Phil. 2. 12. And they that continually receive their Dole and Portion from Him, are obliged to please him in all things.

Of of Direction. When you come to wait on the Word, or receive here any quickning Exhortation, call God into the Business, that the thing may not die away in your Hearts. Make conscience of Praying, as well as Hearing; you hear from Man in God's Name, but carry it again to God, that he may bless it. All Religion is carried on between the Pulpit, and the Throne of Grace. You will thrive if you conscienciously make use of both Ordinances; if you hear of Christ in the Aword, and make use of him in Prayer.

II. Observation. That Prayer must be made to God alone. Psal. 65. 2. Oh thou that hearest Prayer, unto thee shall all Flesh come: The Apostle here addresseth himself to God, and

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I. He alone is capable of hearing Prayers. We conceive of God as an infinite Being, Wife, Powerful, and Good; as knowing all things, as able to do all things, as willing to give all things, that we can in reason and righteousness ask of him.

(1.) He knoweth all things, our Persons, Wants, Necessities, Prayers. Our Persons: God knoweth that there is such a Creature

in the World as thou art; for furely God knoweth whom he hath made, and whom he supporteth, and governeth. A notable Instance we have, Acts 9. 11. And the Lord Said unto him, Arife, and go into the Street that is called Straight, and inquire in the House of Judas, for one called Saul of Tarfus: for behold be prayeth. What a description is here of God's particular Providence? the City of Damasem, the Street called Straight, the House of one Judas, the Person, a Lodger there, one Paul of Tarius; the Action he was imployed in, behold, he Prayeth! He knoweth our Wants and Necessities, Mark 6.8. Ton Father knoweth what things you have need of before you ask him. He observed every weary step of David in the Wilderness, and all his Tears and Sorrows, Pfal. 56. 8. Thou telleft my Wandrings; put thou my Tears in thy Bottle: are they not in thy Book? He particularly took notice of all the Troubles and Sorrows of his Exile and wandring Condition, as if his Tears had been preserved in a Bottle, and his Troubles registred, or recorded in a Book. The Doctrine of the Gentiles was, Dii magna mcurant, parva negligunt: That great and weigh-

remant, parva negligunt: That great and weighty Matters the Lord took into his Care, but left other things to their own event and chance; but the Doctrine of the Scriptures is otherwise, God taketh notice of every particular Person. For our Prayers, Plal. 346.

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This poor Man cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his Troubles. How obscure soever the Worshipper be in the account of the World, if he depend on God, the Lord will regard him.

(2.) For his Power, he is able to do all * Things. Mark 14.36: Abba, Father, all things

are possible to thee.

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(3.) For his Goodness, he relieveth all his Creatures, heareth the moans of the Beafts, much more the Prayers of the Saints. Plal. 145: 15, 16. The Eyes of all things watt upon the Lord, and thou groeft them their Meat in+ due feafon, &c. Now this he makes a ground of fulfilling the defires of them that feur him. and being near to all that call upon him, Vers. 18, 19. He that feedeth a Kite, will he not provide for a Child? Surely we have more reason to trust in God than they, if you think this belongeth to his common Bounty? But in Spiritual things it is otherwise, he is most pleased, when we ask Spiritual Bleffings. 1 Kings 3. 10. It pleased the Lord, that Solomon asked this thing. Well then, fince none other is capable, and God is, to him mult we come.

2. The Scriptures, which are the proper Rule of Worthip, direct us to no other. When Christ taught his Disciples to pray, he directed them to God. Luke 11.2. When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven.

Invo-

Invovation is Divine Worship, and so done to God alone.

3. When the Spirit moveth us to pray, he inclineth us to come to God, Rom. 8. 15. To have received the Spirit of Adoption, wherehy we cry, Abba, Father. Gal. 4. 5, 6. Because ye are Sons, be hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father. He doth not move us to go to the Saints, but to God.

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The Use. Well then, if any trouble befal us, let us call on God, unbosom our selves to him; Pfal. 50. 15. Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and than shah glorify me. If we want any Grace, let us go to the God of all Grace, in the Name of Christ; Heb. 4. 16. Seeing therefore we have a great High Priest that is entred into Heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to belp us in a time of need. We can pray to none but to him in whom we trust; Plalm. 62. 8. Trust in the Lord at all times; pour out your Hearts before him. Trust is the Foundation of Prayer. they that look to God for all, will frequently apply themselves to him: Our Necessities and Wants are continual, both as to the Temporal and Spiritual Things, we need not only daily Bread, but daily Pardon, daily Strength against Temptations; therefore let us often come to God. III. Obsere

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III. Observation; That Jesus Christ is invoked together with the Father, as an Author of Grace, and thereby his God-head is proved; for he that is an Object both of Internal and External Worship, is God: Now fuch is Christ. Of Internal Worship, Joh. 14. 1. Te believe in God, believe also in me. Though Christ died as Man, yet he is God equal with the Father, and an Object of Faith and Trust. For External Worship or Prayer, the Text is clear; Our Lord Jesus Christ, and God even our Father. That is much for the comfort of the Faithful, that we have God to trust in, and Christ to trust in; that we that have sinned with both hands earnefly, have a double ground of our Comfort and Hope, the infinite Mercy and Power of God, and the infinite Merit of a Mediator. There is a great latitude in the Object of Faith, and fo of Invocation, The Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father. There is no pain so great, that God in Christ cannot remove; no Danger so dreadful, but he can prevent; no Misery so deep, but he can deliver from it; no Enemy fo strong, but he can vanquish them; no Want that he cannot Supply: When we have a Want that he cannot supply, or a Sickness that he cannot cure, or a Danger that he cannot prevent, or a Milery that he cannot remove, or Enemies that are

too hard for him, then we may fit down and despair, and die. I speak of both as one, for God and Christ are here joined as to the same effect, comforting them Hearts, and star blissing them in every good Word and Work.

IV. We can obtain nothing from God unless we seek it in Christ. Therefore the Apostle beginnesh his Prayer, Now our Lord
Jesus Christ, and God; &c. God alone is
abundantly enough for our happiness, son
there is in him more than abundantly enough
to satisfy all the Capacities of the Creature;
but without a Mediator, how shall we come
to receive of his fulness? If Man had kept
innocent, God had been enough to us; for
in Innocency there was no Mediator, but to
Man fallen a Mediator is necessary.

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I. I stall state the necessity of its Because of Distance and Difference, we are unworthy to approach his Holy Presence; and God hath a Quarrel and Controvers with us which till it be taken up, we can expect no

good thing from him.

(1.) Diffance. We are estranged from God by the Fall, and having lost his Image lost his Favour, and Fellowship, and all communion with him; so that God now is looked upon by us, as our of the reach of our Commerce, which hindreth our love and considence in him; for we can hardly depend

hend upon one so far above us, that he will take notice of us, or take care for us, fo as to relieve us in our Necessities, or help us in our Mideries, and give us the Bleffings we ask of him, or that we shall be welcome to him: when we come with our Prayers and Supplimions. God raught the Ifraelites their dihance; and the Apostle telleth us, that all that differnation the Holy Ghost did fignify; That the way into the Holiest was not yet made munifest, while the first Tabernacte was standing, Heb. 9. 8. They could not come near God without danger of Death, he would not hive them to familiar with him.

(2.) Difference, or Controverfy; A Mediacor is used only between disagreeing Par-Hes. When Man was guilty, God was angry. Conscience of Sin presents God terrible, and taketh away all confidence from us, fo that we are obnoxious to his Wrath and righteous Vengeance; Who is able to stand before this Holy God ? I Sam. 6.20. And who can dwell with everlasting Burnings & Ha. 23. 14. We mmot approach God in any friendly man-

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2. I shall shew what Provision God hath made for us. The Lord Jesus wook this Office at God's appointment, of reconciling God " to us, and appearing his Wrath, and us to God, by bringing us back again, our alienateth

and estranged Affections to God. How fo! what hath he done?

I. The Distance is in truth taken away by his very Person, he is God-Man; God and Man meet together in the Person of Christa God doth condescend and come down to Man, and Man is incouraged to afcend to God; God in Christ is nearer to Man thanhe was before, that we may have more familiar thoughts of him: The pure Deity is at fo walt a distance from us, that we are amazed and confounded when we think of it, and = cannot conceive an hope that he should concern himself in our Affairs: But the Son of God is come in our Nature; John 1. 14. The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among un. I Tim. 3. 16. Grace is the Mystery of Godlines God manifested in the Flesh : So that he is more acceptable to us, and nearer at hand, and more readily inclined to help us, for he will not be strange to his own Flesh.

2. The Difference and Controverly is taken up by the Work of his Redemption; for God hath fet him forth to be a Propitiation, or a means of appealing his Wrath, Rom, a 25. and to be the Foundation of that New Covenant, wherein Pardon and Life is offered to us: It is not enough to our Recovery, that God be reconciled, but Man must be re-newed, otherwise we remain for ever under Na the displeasure of God. Now he hath pur- ble

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ouraled chased the Grace of the Spirit, to be dispensed by the Covenant, to bring us home to God; Titus 3.5,6. Nor by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy be saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And, Rom. 8.2. For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the Law of Sin and Death.

Use. Let us be sensible of this unspeakable Mercy, that God hath provided a Mediator for us, that we may come to God by him: Heb. 7. 25. Wherefore he is able to save unto the uttermost, all that come unto God through him, n seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for us: That the legal Exclusion is removed, and a way opened to the Father; John 14.6. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no Man cometh to the Father but by me: Otherwise we could not immediately converse with God, nor trust in him.

at hand, and ready to help us; he came down amongst us, and became one of us; was bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh: And though he hath removed his dwelling into Heaven again, it is for our sakes, he hath carried our Nature thither, to take possession of that blessed Place in our Name, if we have a mind

Gg 2

to follow him; John 14. 2. I go to prepare a

Place for you.

(2.) Here we fee the means of appealing God's Wrath; 2 Cor. 5. 19. God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself: There is a full Ransom paid, all that enter into God's

Peace shall have the benefit of it.

(3.) By him we are encouraged to come to pray for every Bleffing we stand in need of; Ephel 2. 18. Through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father. Liberty to approach unto God, is a priviledg which we cannot enough value; the Wall of Partition between God and us, is broken down by Christ, he hath compleatly satisfied God's Justice, Heb. 10.19. He is now at the right Hand of God interceding for us: 1 Tim.2.5. There is one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesse; and remaineth with God as the great Agent of the Saints: Heb.8.1,2. We have fuch an High Priest, who is set on the right Hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens, a Minifter of the Santhary, &c. Perfuming their Prayers with the smoke of his Incense; Rev. 8. 3, 4. And another Angel came and flood at the Altar, having a Golden Cenfer, and there was given unto him much Incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the Golden Altar which was before the Throne. And the smoke of the Incense, which came with the prayers

of the Saints, ascended up before God out of the o Angel's band.

V. Mark the distinct Titles given to God and the Mediator; Christ is called our Lard, and God our Father: Let us see what these

Titles import of Lord and Father.

[1.] Christ is represented to us as the Lord, so he was set forth by the Apostles at the first preaching of the Gospel: Acts 10.36. We preach Peace by Christ Jesus, he is Lord of all. 2 Cor. 4.5. We preach Christ Jesus the Lord. Col. 2.6. If ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him. Christ is Lord two ways.

(t.) By that right which belongeth to him as Creator, and is common and equal to him with the Father and the Spirit: Surely the Creator of the World, is the Soveraign of it; this Right continueth still, and shall continue while Man receiveth his being from God by Creation, and the continuance of his being, by daily preservation and providence.

(2.) There is novum jus Dominii & Imperii, a new Right of Empire and Government, which belongeth to him as Redeemer, and this

accrueth to him,

1. Partly by the Donation of God; Acts 2.36. Let all the House of Israel know, that this Jesus whom ye have erucified, is made Lord, and Christ. This Office of Lord is derivative,

Gg 3

and canot be supream, but subordinate, it is derived from God; All Power is given to me both in Heaven and Earth, Matth. 28. 18. and it is referred to him, Phil. 2. 11. That every Tongue should confess, that Christ is Lord, to the eglory of God the Father. The supream right of governing is still in God, and subjection to him is not vacated, but established, and reserved.

2. It is acquired by his own purchase, Rom. 14. 9. For this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of Dead and Living. 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. Te are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your Body, and in your Spirit, which are God's: He had a full right in us before, but this Lordship and Dominion which the Redeemer is possessed of, is comfortable and beneficial to us, and the end of it is to effect Man's Cure and Recovery. We could not by our fin make void God's Right and Title to govern us, but yet it was not comfortable to us, it was but such a Right as a Prince hath to chastise his Rebellious Subjects. We forfeited our Interest in his gracious Protection, therefore was this new Interest set afoot to save and recover Fallen Man; therefore this Lordship is spoken of as Medicinal, and Restorative, to reduce Man to the Obedience of God that made him. Acts 10. 38. God anointed Jefus

of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with Power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the Devil. It is a Lordship, that conduceth to make Peace between God and Man, that we may again enjoy his Favour, and live in his Obedience. Acts 5. 31. Him hath God exalted with his right Hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins. This new Lord hath made a new Law of Grace, which is, Lex Remedians, a Remedy propounded for the recovering the lapsed World of Mankind; the great benefit is, Remission of Sins, the great Duty, Repentance.

Use 1. To perfwade us to submit our selves to this Blessed Lord, by our voluntary con-sent; Psalm. 45. 11. He is thy Lord, worship " thou him. There is a passive Subjection, and a voluntary Submission. By a passive Subjection all Creatures are under the Power of the Son of God, and our Redeemer; And amongst the rest the Devils themselves, though grievous Revolters and Rebels, are not exempted; Every Knee is forced to bow to Christ. By voluntary submission, those are Christ's Subjects, and admitted into his Kingdom, who willingly give up themselves to the Redeemer, to be faved upon his own " terms: 2 Cor. 8. 5. They first gave their own Celves Gg 4

felves to the Lord. The Devils and wicked Men are his against their wills; but all Christ's

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People are his by their own confent.

Use 2. Let us perform the Duties, which this Title calleth for: Our Obedience is the best Testimony of our subjection to him. Many from to like Christ as a Saviour, but refuse him as a Lord; whereas Christ is nor only a Saviour to Blefs, but a Lord to Rule and Command. Therefore if we catch at Comforts, and neglect Duty, we do not own Christ's Authority. The Libertine yokeless Spirit is very natural to all. Luke 19.14. We will not have this Man to raign over us. Pfall 12. 4. With our Tongues we will prevail; our Lips are our own, who is Lord over us? Pfal. 2. 2. Let is break their Bands affunder, and east away their Cords from us. Some are so in Opinion, but most in Practice. We would not be under Command; we love Privileges, but decline Duties. But he is the Head of the Church, who is the Saviour of the Body, Ephelis. 23. If we would have Privileges by him, we must set our selves to obey his Laws: If thou haft no care to obey him as = a Lord, thy efteem of Christ is but imagipary, thy knowledg but partial, thy application of him unfound. But we will own him as Lord: How is that understood? Will you give him an empty Title, or some superficial Complements, and Observances? Luke 646. And

And why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not " the things that I fay? It is a Mockage. Or. will you pleafe your felves with strict Opinions? Matth 6.21, 22. For where your Treafore is, there will your Heart be also. The light of the Body is the Eye, if therefore thine Eye be fingle, thy whole Body shall be full of Light; if therefore the Light that is in thee be Darkness, how great is that Darknes? No, nothing less than a through subjection to his holy Laws, forfaking all other Lords. Ifa. 26. 13. O Lord our God, other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us. but by thee only will we make mention of thy Name. And then a strict Observance, Col. 1.11. frengthened with all might according to his glorious Power, unto all Patience and Long-fuffering, with joyfulness.

Ofe 3. Depend upon Christ for the effects of his Love to you, which are the Privileges of his Kingdom, which are Pardon of Sins. Col. 1. 13, 14. In whom we have redemption through his Blood, the forgiveness of our Sins, the sanctification of the Spirit. Heb. 8. 10. This is the Covenant, that I will make with the House of Urael after those Days, saith the Lord, I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts. Assistance in carrying on the Spiritual Life; that here surely our Lord will not desert us, but help us in our Obstience to him. Finally, everlasting Life. 4

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Heb. 5.9. And being made Perfett, he became the Anthor of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him. When the Devil and his Instruments are cast into Hell, Christ's faithful Subjects and Servants are advanced into eter-

nal Glory and Bleffedness.

[2.] God is represented under the Title of a Father; and God even our Father. God is a word of Power, Father expresseth his good will and Love; God standeth in both Relations to us, as he did also to Christ. John 20, 17. I go to my God, and your God; my Father, and your Father. Both joyned together, signifie his Power, and readiness to do Good. He that is our Father is true God also, and he that is true God is also our Father; and therefore we may depend on him. That which we are to open is, the term Father, which speaketh both Comfort, and Duty to us.

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I. Comfort. For God's dealing with us will be very Fatherly; as a Father loveth his Children, so will God love his People.

2 Cor. 6. 18. I will be a Father to you, and ye finall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord.

(i.) He will pardon our Sins, and Frailties, and spare us, and pity us, notwithstanding cour ill deservings. Psal. 103. 13. Like as a Father pitieth bis Children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Mal. 3. 17. They shall be mine

wine, faith the Lord of Hosts, in that Day when I make up my fewels, and I will spare w them, as a Man spareth his own Son that serweth him. Surely this is a Grace we stand in need of, because of our manifold Instruities, and daily Failings.

(2.) He will give Grace, that we may leve him better. Luke 11. 13. If ye though being evil, know how to give good gifts to your Children: how much more shall your Heavens Far ther give the holy Spirit to them that aik him? Do but cry to him, as an hungry Child to his Father for Bread, and God will not deny

this great Gift to you.

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(3.) God will provide for us, and give such an allowance of Temporal Mercies as are convenient. Mark 6. 25. Take no thought pour Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on. And Ver. 32. For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. The belief of Adoption and particular Providence, kills all distrustful sears and cares at the very Root.

(4.) He will protect you and preserve you against Temptations. I Pet. 1. 3, 5. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant Mercy, he hath begotten as again unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ stom the dead, &c.

Who are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation.

(5.) He will give you the Kingdom. Luke 12.32. Fear not little Flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.

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2. On the other fide, this Relation befpeaketh Duty. For if God be a Father, we must carry our selves as Children by our subjection to him; that is, by submission to his Disposing.

Will, and obedience to his Governing-Will.

(1.) By an absolute submission to his Dispofing-Will. For if you would enjoy the Privileges of God's Family, you must submit to the Discipline of his Family. Heb. 12. 6, 7. 8. 9. For whom God loveth be chafteneth, and Scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth. If you endure chaftening, God dealeth with you as with Sons: for what Son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if you are without chastise ment, whereof all are partakers, then are Bastards, and not Sons. Furthermore, we have had Fathers of our Flesh, which chastened us, and we gave them Reverence: Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? In Heaven, where there is no danger of Sin, there is no use of the the Rod; but while we are in the Flesh, we need Correction, and if God should not give it us, we are voto, not Legitimate, but Degenerate Sons. But in the 10th Verse, the Apoltle argueth from God's Paternal Authority,

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God's

ming. For they werely for a few days chastened a after their own pleasure, but he for our proit that we weight be partakers of his Holines. " Children, though they take it ill to be beaen by others, yet not by their Parents, who (under God) are the cause of their Being, and love them, and in correction of them feek their Good: Much more do we owe this respect to our Heavenly Father, who hath a more absolute right over us. Parents may err through want of Wisdom, their Chastisements may be arbitrary, and irregular, do much in Passion rather than Compasfion; but all God's Chaftisements come from # purest Love, and are regulated by perfect # Wisdom, and tend to, and end in Holines and Happinels.

(2.) Obedience to his Governing Will. The great duty of Children is to love, please, obey, and honour their Father. Mal. 1.6. A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Master. If I be a Father, where is mine Honour? If I be a Master, where is my Fear? I Pet. I.14, 15. As obedient Children, not fashioning your slives according to the former lusts in your square concer. But as he which hath called you is Holy, so be ye holy in all manner of Conversation. John 13. 8. Herein is my Father. Glorified, that ye har much Fruit, so shall be be my Discipler. There should be a great tenderness upon us to do any thing that may be a breach of

God's Law, or tend to God's Dishonoun. What diligent Observers were the Rechabites of the Institutions of their Family? Jet. 35. 6. But they said, We will drink no Wine: for Jonadab the Son of Rechab our Father commanded us, saying, Te shall drink no Wine, neither ye, nor your Sons for ever.

VI. Observ. They to whom Christ is a Lord, to them God is a Father: his special Fatherly Love floweth in the Chanel of Redemption, and is brought about by the Gofpel. The Lord from all Eternity, predeterminated some to the Adoption of Sons: Eph. 1.5. Having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jesus (hrist to himself, according tothe good pleasure of his Will. But how doth he bring to pass this Decree? By the Re-demption of Christ. It is no mean Privilege, Christians, that needeth so much ado to chablish it. Gal. 4. 4, 5. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law, To redeem them that were under the Law, that = we might receive the Adoption of Sons. Christ came to be the Foundation of a New Covenant, before we could have this Privilege. · Well, but whence ariseth our actual Interest? I answer: By accepting the offer of the Gos spel, or receiving and owning Christ to the ends for which he came into the World, or God

God fent him into the World. John 1. 12.
But as many as received him, to them gave be power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name: That is, by depending on his Merits for our Reconciliation with God, and submitting to his Laws, that he might reduce us to our Primitive Obedinence, and Love to them.

Use. Therefore if you would have a share

in this bleffed Privilege, and are the sent to

1. You must be Regenerated by his Spirit: for the Relative Change dependeth on the Real; our State is not changed, till our Natures be changed, John 1. 12, 13. Being born again of the Will of God. If you would enter into God's Family, and enjoy the Privileges thereof, you must be changed by the

Spirit.

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2. There is required on our part, an entrance into the Kingdom of the Mediator by Faith and Repentance. Matth. 18.3. Except ye be Converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of God. As little Children are newly entred into the World, and beginning their Life, all things are become new to them: So those that have the privileges of God's Children, must become as little Children, enter into a new State, carry on a new Life and Trade, with which they were not acquainted before. Vour first admission is by a consent to the

New Covenant; Gal. 3. 26. Te are all made Children of God by Faith in Christ; depending on the merit of Christ's Sacrifice, and hinding our felves by a foleran Word, to perform the Duties required of us, which we renew again in the Lord's Supper.

VII. That we most comfortably come to God by Christ for Grace, when we consider our Interest in him, and Relation to him. Their Relation is here intimated, for Jesus Christ is our Lord, and God is our Father; and surely our Lord will not resule his own Subjects, nor our Father be strange to his own Children.

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1. It is certain that among Men, Relation to any Person or thing indeareth them to us, To avison mains in Na onlocation, Men love their own Children; though not so fair and good as others, yet they are their own. And is it not so as to God? See John 13. 1. Having loved his own that were in the World, he loved them unso the end. And John 17. 6. I have manifested thy Name to the Men whith thou gavest me out of the World; thine they were, and then gavest them me, and they have kept thy Word.

2. Interest giveth us more incouragement. Isa. 63. 19. We are thine, thou never bearest rule over them, they were never called by thy Name: That is, we are thy People, thy Subjects,

Subjects, so called, so accounted. That Interest giveth some hope and considence is evident, because sometimes the Saints plead the common Relation, that they are the Workmanship of his hands; Psalm. 119. 73. Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn thy Commandments: They will not quit their Interest in God, if they cannot come as his special Servants, yet as his Creatures, one way or another, they will intitle themselves to him.

Use. To direct the Servants of God, when they ask any Grace of him, to bring it to this still, Our Lord, and our Father. But how shall they do so, if they have no assurance?

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r. There are some Titles which imply a claim to Benefits, and Priviledges; others that infer an obligation to Duty: these latter may be used without any usurpation, Joh. 20.

28. My Lord, and my God.

2. Refignation of your selves to him, sheweth you are his, and in time you will come to know that he is yours, if you make it good; Psalm. 119. 94. I am thine, save me, for I have sought thy Precepts. Resolve to obey him, and serve him, however he deal with you. Choice of God for our Portion, and Christ for our Lord, sheweth you are resolved to be his.

3. Speak as the Covenant speaketh that you are under, till your sincerity be more unquestionable; God offers himself to be our God, and Redeemer, and Father; Christ to be our Lord and Saviour: Isa.63. 16. Doubtless thon art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledg us not, thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy Name is from everlasting. God offered himself to be so, and God is angry for not owning it; Jer.3. 4. Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my Youth?

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SERMON XV.

2 Theff. 2. 16, 17.

—Which hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through Grace.

VE come now to the second Branch, The ground of Audience and Success in Prayer, Which hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through Grace. Where three grounds of Acceptance are intimated.

1. The first is taken from the Rise and Foundation of all the Love of God, he hath

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2. From the Matter of our Comfort, lie hath given us everlasting Consolation.

3. From the Way whereby we receive it, and entertain it, and good hope through Grace.

The first relateth to our Redemption by Christ.

The fecond to the New Covenant.

The third to the disposition of our Hearts, and how we are affected in the reception of Hh 2 these

these things; as will appear more in the ex-

plication of each Branch.

First; I begin with the Rise and Foundation of that Grace, which we expect and beg of God in Prayer, He hath loved us.

Doct. That God's Love to Sinners, manifested in our Redemption by Christ, giveth great boldness and encouragement in Prayer.

I. I shall prove this is the Love here in-

tended.

2. That this giveth boldness in Prayer.

I. That this is the Love here intended, for these Reasons.

I. This is a visible effect and demonstration of his Love to us; I John 3. 16. Hereby perceive we the Love of God to us, in that he layed down his life for us. And I John 4.9,10. In this was manifested the Love of God towards us. in that he fent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live by him: Herein was Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our fins. From these places I gather, that to found our Confidence and Hope, it was needful that the Love God had to us, should shew it felf by some manifest and real proof. How can we tell how God's Heart standethaffected to Mankind but by the Effects? What-ever benevolence or good-will he had towards us, it is not evident to us till it break forth into

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fome Action, and real performance of some great thing for us. Now this was fully manifested, in giving his Son to die for a sinful World, that he hath a love for us, and doth really desire our Salvation. There is an hidden love of God, which is his eternal Purpose and Decree; and there is an open and declared Love, and that is first and most seen in our Redemption by Christ. In Predestination his Love was conceived in his Heart; in Redemption it is manifested in the Effects, that was the Rise, this the visible Demonstration and Sign of it: Now the Apostle would not reason from what was hidden and secret, but from what is open and manifest.

2. This is not only the Demonstration and visible Proof of the reality of his Love, but an ample representation and commendation of the greatness of his Love: Rom. 5. 8. But God commendeth his Love to us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us. A thing may be demonstrated to be real, that yet is not commended or fet forth as great and glorious: But God would express his Love in fuch an aftonishing Instance, that we might admire the greatness, as well as believe the reality of it. John 3. 16. God fo loved the World, &c. that is, so unspeakably, so unconceivably would he express his Love to Mankind, as to fend his Son to affume our Nature, and die for our Transgressions: He doth not tell you

Hh 3 how

how, but leaveth you to admire at it, and rejoice in it. What may we not expect from this Love, this great Love! if God loveth us at such a rate, surely he is in good earnest, his Heart is set upon our Salvation, or else he would never have taken this course of giving his only Son to suffer an accursed and shameful Death. Now when the Apostle saith, God hath loved us, he meaneth it of the great instance of his Love, Analogum per se positum, stat pro suo significatu famosori: Words not restrained by the Context, must be interpreted in the most famous and known sense.

3. This is the first motive to draw our hearts to him; I John 4. 19. We love him, because he loved us first: The first motive of our Affection is not his special Electing-Love to us above others, for that we cannot know before we love him; but his common Love and Mercy to Sinners, and that was manifested in Christ's being sent to be a Propitiation for our Sins; and not for ours only, but also for the fins of the whole World: This is that which is propounded to us to recover and reconcile our alienated and estranged Affections to God; 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20. God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespasses unto him. This Grace God offereth to us, as well as others; namely, that for Christ's sake he will pardon our Sins, if we will lay down our Weapons, and enter

enter into his Peace. None are bound to believe that God specially loveth them, but
those that are specially beloved by him; for
none are bound to believe a falshood, and
a falshood it is to us, till we have the saving Effects and Benefits. Therefore it is
not the special, but the general Love which
first draweth in our hearts to God; yea, the
Saints after some Testimonies received of
God's special Love, still make this to be the
great ingaging Motive, Gal. 2. 20. I live by
Faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and y
gave himself for me. Well then, this is most
likely to be meant by the Apostle.

II. This must needs give great boldness in

Prayer.

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1. By this we see that God's Love is not a cold ineffectual Love, that confifts only in raw wishes, but an operative active Love, that iffueth forth to accomplish what he intendeth to us, though by the most costly means, and acted at the dearest rate. God is good, and doth good, Pfal. 119.68. He hath a Love to us, and will do good to us. Our Love many times goes no further than good Wishes, or good Words, Be warmed, be cloathed, but giveth not those things which are needful to the Body, James 2. 16. but God resteth not in kind Wishes, but giveth a full demonstration of it: If Christ be needful to Hh 4 the The Saints, they shall have him; if God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also

freely give us all things?

2. It is an act of fuch infinite Love in God to give us Christ to die for us, such as may raife our wonder and astonishment. God's Love is an unmeasurable Love, and so inlargeth our expectations and capacity for the reception of other things. Ephel. 3. 18, 19. That ye may comprehend with all Saints to know what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth knowledg, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. There is such an immensity in the Love of Christ, as raiseth our desire and hopes to expect all other things from God, that belong to our Duty and Happiness. If God will do this, what will he not do for those whom he loveth? He that hath given the greatest Gift, will not stick at leffer things; He that hath given a Talent, shall he not give a Penny? He that hath given Christ, will he not give pardon to cancel our Debts? Grace to do our Duty? Comfort to support us in Afflictions? Supplies to maintain and protect us during our Service? Finally, Will he not reward us when our Work is over? Reconciliation by his Death is propounded as more difficult, than Salvation by his Life: Rom. 5. 10. For if when we

were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son; much more being reconciled,

we shall be faved by his Life.

3. It is a Gift in order to other things, and therefore he will compleat that Gift. Christ came to purchase all manner of Blessings for us, the Favour of God, the Fruition of God, the everlasting Fruition of God in Glory, and all things by the way necessary thereunto. There are two Arguments im-

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without any impeachment of his Honour: His Justice and Holiness is sufficiently demonstrated, the Authority of his Law, and Truth of his Threatnings kept up. Rom. 3.25, 26. Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his Righteousness, that he might be just, and the justisfier of him that believeth in Jesus.

(2.) That after God by an antecedent bounty hath layed the Foundation so broad and deep, the consequent bounty, which is as the upper Building, for which this Foundation was intended, will be laid on also. It was said of the foolish Builder, That he began and was not able to finish: Surely the wise God, if we be qualified, and put no

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impediment on our part, will finish what he

hath begun.

4. Because the giving of Christ sheweth how freely God will give all things to us, he gave Christ unasked, unfought to; in this instance we see his free and undeserved love : This was love to Rebels and Enemies, when the World had corrupted their way, and cast off God, then Christ died for us; a consideration which serveth to support our Confidence, notwithstanding the sense of our unworthiness. In the Covenant of Grace, great and wonderful Mercies are given out to a world of Sinners, and to our felves among the rest; we see how loth God is Sinners should perish. That fins may be pardoned, if we will accept God's terms, that hath given fuch general testimony of his Love to Mankind, his Love to miserable sinners; That is willing they should be reconciled. that there is not so much difference between us and others, as between him and all. Now this incourageth us to fulfil the Conditions of the Gospel, notwithstanding our unworthiness of the Privileges thereof.

1. Use is Caution. Let us not have wrong thoughts of God, when we come to him. We think of God the Father as one that is all Wrath and Justice, and unwilling to be reconciled to Man, or brought to it with much

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much difficulty. No: Christ came on purpose to show the Love and Loveliness of God to us; for our Redemption came first out of x the Bosom of God; and Christ's mission into the World, and dying for Sinners was the fruit of his Love, and mainly for this end to give us a full Demonstration of the Love of God, and his pity to the lost World of Sinners, that when our Guilt had made him frightful to us, we might not fly from him as a Condemning God; but love Him, and ferve Him, and pray to Him, as one willing to be Reconciled to us; therefore take heed what Picture of God you draw in your Minds: Light and heat are not more abundant in the Sun, than Love is in God.

of God in Prayer, as one that loveth us. We have gained a great point, when we are perhaded of this, and can come with this thought into his Presence; that I am praying to a God that loveth me, and will do me good. You will say, If I could come to that, I have gained a great point indeed: But what hindreth? There is,I confess, a two-fold Love; his General Love, and his Special Love. His General Love, which intendeth Benefits to us; and his Special Love, which hath already put us in possession of them. His General Love to the lost World, and his Love and Mercy to us in particular, putting

us in possession of the saving Benefits purcha-

fed and intended.

(1.) The Géneral Love to the lost World. that is a great thing the Devil seeketh to hide and obscure, the wonderful Love of God revealed in our Redeemer, that we may still fly from God, as more willing to Punish than to Save; and many poor dark Creatures gratifie his defign, We are still seeking signs and tokens of God's Love, fomething to warrant us to come to God by Christ, and to persuade us that we shall be welcome if we do for and because we cannot find any thing in our felves that he will admit us, we are troubled. But all this while we are but feeking the Sun with a Candle. What greater evidence of God's willingness to receive you, than the Death of Christ, than the Institutions of the Gospel? This is above all Evidences, that he fent his Son to die for us. This is like the Tews, who, when they had feen many Wonders wrought by Christ, would still have a new Sign; the greatest Sign is given already, Christ dying for a finful World. Men and Angels cannot find out a Sign, Pledg, and Confirmation of the Love of God above that: Yet, if that be not enough, we have another Sign, the Promises, and Invitations of the Gospel, which show his willingness to welcome Sinners. Salvation is offered, but not to named, but described Persons. Therefore

fore if we are willing to come under these hopes upon God's Terms, this may satisfy our scrupulous Minds, there is no Bar put to us, but what we put to our selves by our refusing the Grace as God offereth it. Certainly, God's Love and Mercy to lost Mankind is our first motive, and his willingness to impart good things to them upon his own Terms, and surely he is well pleased with our

acceptance of them.

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(2.) There is Special Love, where this Grace is applied to us. Ephel. 2. 4, 5. But God who is rich in mercy, for his great Love, wherewith he loved us, bath quickned us, when we were dead in Trespasses and Sins. He did not begin to love us when we were converted, that is of a more ancient and eternal Rife, but when he did begin to apply his Love to us; and this is no ordinary, but great Love, when God was angry with us, and pronounced Wrath on us in the Sentence of the Law, and appeared as an Enemy in the course of his Providence, and the apprehensions of our guilty Fears, then to be Reconciled; and furely this is a great advantage to draw nigh to God as a Reconciled Father. This is the Object of our everlasting Love and Joy, Rom. 5.11. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the Atonement: And this is a prop of confidence in Prayer. Could

we once believe that he dearly loves us, and is reconciled to us, and taketh us for his Children, that he delighteth in our Prosperity; Oh how chearfully dould we come into his Prefence! John 16.27. The Father himfelf loveth you, because you have loved me, and believe that I came out from God. They have not only his Intercession, but the Father's especial Love. which is the ground and hope of Audience. Now this particular Interest dependeth on fomething wrought in our Souls by the holy Spirit; our Lord mentionethtwo things, their Faith in Christ, and Love to God. (1.) Faith in Christ, or a thankful acceptance of him, as our Lord and Saviour, therefore called receiving Christ, and entitleth us to the Privileges of Christ's Children. John 2. 12. To as many as received him, to them gave he liberty to become the Children of God, even to as many as believe in his Name. (2.) Love to God. John 14.21. He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and be that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my self to bim. And Vers. 23. If any Man love me, be will keep my Words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. We cannot perceive our Interest in the special Love of God, but by our Sincerity, Faith in Christ, and Love to God. When we fee God's Love taken in our Hearts,

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we may know that he loveth us, especially the latter; for by the latter, the former is manifested also. Gal. 5.6. Faith worketh by Love. Now the evidences of fincere Love to God, are feeking after God, and delighting in him; if you cannot find the latter, the former will evidence it to you. Prov. 8. 17. I love them that love me, and those that seek me early hall find me. The defiderium unionis, the defiring feeking Love, if it be ferious and earnest, it is sincere, though you find not such delightful apprehensions of his Grace to you. # Clear that once, and when you come to Prayer, you may know God loveth you; and the dearest Friend we have in the World, hath not the thousandth part so much as he; yea, the highest Angel doth not love God so much as he loveth the lowest Saint. God loveth like himself, becoming the Greatness and Infiniteness of his own Beeing, and with this perfualion pray to him.

Secondly, The second ground of Audience is from the fruit of his Love, as demonstrated in the New Covenant, wherein we have the matter of everlasting Consolation. Surely this Clause respects not the effect and sense in our own Hearts, but respects the Matter and Object of our Comfort; for he prayeth for the Application of it afterwards: Comfort your Hearts, &c. And besides, nothing is more fleeting, and oftner interrupted, than our

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Comfort in this Life: It would contradict plain sense to call that Comfort which Christians feel, and actually enjoy everlasting Comfort. Therefore I understand it of the Matter, and observe this Doctrine,

That God hath given all true Believers solid ground of perpetual and endless Comfort.

I will prove it by three Arguments.

[1.] The Comforts propounded are of an everlasting Tendency and Benefit, Pardon and Life, to free us from everlasting Death. and to bring us into the possession of everlasting Happiness, when our Souls and Bodies shall be for ever glorified in Heaven. Now the Consolation grounded on the promise of Eternal Life, whatever it be in our feeling, is in its causes and foundation Eternal. The Scripture often insists upon this: 1 John 2. 25. And this is the Promise that he hath promised us, even Eternal Life. Heb. 5:9. And being made Perfect, he became the Author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him. We have by Christ deliverance from Sin, and and all the Consequents of it, not only for a time, but for ever: Eternal Peace and Felicity is our Portion. So it is faid, Pfal. 119. III. Thy Testimonies have I taken for an Heritage for ever; for they are the rejoycing of my Heart. It is not an Heritage to lean upon for a while, as all our Worldly Comforts are, but

but for ever: So Pfal. 73. 26. God is my Portion for ever: That is, when all other things fail, have spent their allowance, can afford us no more relief; then we begin to enjoy our true and proper Portion. It were endless to heap up places. Man for his Sin was cast out of Paradise: but surely in the other World, there is no change of Estate; for Men are past their Trial, and must be what they are for ever. If you could imagin (as fome have had the large charity to conceit it) that the condition of the Wicked should be changed, yet there is no Reason at all why the state of the Godly should be changed, who have past the Pikes, and are triumphing with God, that they should ever lofe that Estate again.

[2.] They depend on everlalling Founda-

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are, but 1. The everlasting Love of God. Psal. 103. 17. The Mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, on them that fear him. Not only from the beginning of the World to the end of the World, but from Eternity to Eternity. It was an ordinary Form of praising God in the Old Testament, for his Mercy endureth for ever.

2. The everlasting Merit of Christ, which never loseth its force and effect. Heb. 9. 12. He hath obtained eternal Redemption for us. Not that Christ is always propitiating: No, the

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Work was performed in a short time, but the Virtue of it is of everlasting continuance.

2. There is an eternal and unchangeable Covenant. Heb. 13. 20. Through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant. Though the Covenant made with Ifrael was abolished, yet this is everlasting, and continueth for ever, and shall never be altered; because it was able to reach the end for which it was appointed, which is the eternal Salvation of Man: That was a Temporary Covenant, this Eternal. Now because this is the main Circumstance. and the next ground of our eternal Confolation, the Covenant of Life and Peace that God hath made with us in Christ; I shall prove the eternal truth, and immutable constancy of this Covenant. That a Promise be immutable, certain, and firm, three things are required.

1. That it be ferioufly and heartily made,

with a purpole to perform it.

2. That he that hath promised, continue in his purpose without change of Mind.

3. That it be in the power of him that promifeth, to perform what he hath promifed. Now of all these things there can be no doubt.

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1. God meaneth as he speaketh, when he promiseth to give eternal Life to those that believe and obey the Gospel. There is no questi-

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question, but he is so minded, when he sent the Lord Jesus Christ from Heaven to affure us of it by his Doctrine, to die the Death to purchase it for us, and afterward to rise again and enter into that Happiness that he spake of; and affoon as he was afcended up on High, gave gifts to Men to give notice of this bleffed Estate to be had upon the Terms of his New Covenant, his Spirit attesting the truth of it by divers Signs and Wonders; partly to alarm the drowzy World to regard it, and affure the incredulous World that it is no Fable; and because they live not for ever; did inspire those holy Men before they went out of the Body, to write a Book of this Salvation, for the use of the World in all Ages. To think that God is not serious in all this; yea, to make him a Lyar indeed; yea; to establish a Falshood with the greatest solemnity and demonstration, that can be offered to Mankind; yea, to make a Lye ne-> ceffary not only to the Governing, but Sanctifying of the World: Surely then, there is a truth in that great Promise, which he hath promised us, even Eternal Life.

2. That God doth continue in his Purpose without change of Mind, there is no doubt of it, if we consider his Eternal, and Unchangeable Nature. Mal. 3.6. I am the Lord; I change not. James 1.17. With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. And

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what should alter his Purpose? Doth he meet with any thing that he forefaw not, or knew not before? No: This is a weakness incident to Man: God doth never repent and call back his Grant, which he hath by this condescending Act of Grace ensured to the Heirs of Promise. I Sam. 15.29. The strength of Ifrael will not Lye, nor Repent : for be is not as Man, that he should Repent. Pfal. 110. 4. I bave Sworn, and will not Repent; thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek. Christ is by Oath instated in full power of entertaining and bleffing his Faithful Servants, which shall never be retracted and reverfed. To take off all doubt, he hath given double Affurance, his Word, and his Oath. Heb. 6. 17,18. God being willing more abundantly to shew unto the Heirs of Promise the Immutability of his Counsel, confirmed it with an Oath; That by two Immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie, we might + have strong Consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope that is set before us. That we might know that the New Covenant is Unchangeable and Irrevokable, and fo our Comfort be the more strong, certain, and stable, God was pleased to give sincere Believers this double Affurance, by his Word, and Oath, having regard to our Infirmity, and those many Doubts, wherewith we are haunted about the World to come. God hath ever

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ever bin tender of his Word; above all that is famed, or believed of him, this is most conspicuous, Pfal. 138.2. Thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name. And Matth. 24.35. Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away; And an Oath is μερίσε παρά ἀνθράποις πίσις; and the Apostle tells us, it is περές ἀνδιλογίας. It is interposed usually indeed in a doubtful Matter. But though here it needed not, God would shew his extraordinary care for our Salvation: We see his good Will in the Promise, his solicitude in the Oath. In short, God would never be so salt bound, but that he doth and will still continue his purpose.

3. That he is able to perform it : Faith looks to that also; for this was the ground and prop of Abraham's Faith; Rom. 4. 21. Being fully persuaded, that what God had promised, be was able to perform: So must all Abraham's Children, that would give glory to God in believing. The Way of Salvation is so rare and mysterious, and so many difficulties object themselves to our view, that we are foon puddered, unless we reflect upon the Power of God. God is able to find out a way, whereby Sinners may be reconciled, our corrupt Hearts fanctified, and our Sins fubdued by his Spirit, whereby his Interest in us may be preserved against the Assaults and Temptations of the Devil, World and Flesh;

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he is able to receive our Souls to himfelf after they flit out of the Body: And finally, He . is able to raise our vile Bodies, after they are eaten out by Worms, and turned into Duft; Phil. 3. 21. Who shall change our vile Bodies, that they may be like unto his own glorious Body; according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto bimself. Matters of Faith being wholly or mainly future, or to come, and difficult to be performed. And in the mean time, we being exercised with so many Trials, an express belief of God's Power is necessary to convert fuch an obstinate Greature as Man is: to fanctify fuch a finful Creature, to preserve us in the midst of Temptations, to raise the Dead, are no flight things.

[3.] It is called everlafting Confolation, because it is sufficient to do its Work: That is

to fav,

(1.) To reduce us from temporal and field-pleasing Vanities. Alas! the pleasures of Sin are but for a season, not worthy to be compared to the Recompence of Reward, which Christ hath promised, Heb. 11.25, 26. Ghusing rather to suffer affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt; for he had respect to the recompence of Reward. Whatever is temporal, we may soon see the end of

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it: All carnal Injoyments, like Flowers, wither while we finell on them; and the most . fhining Glory in the World is foon burnt to a Snuff: But Eternal Life, and Eternal Glory, and Eternal Pleasure, is secured to us by Christ's Promise: All the Delights in the World are but a May-game to these Eternal Pleasures, which we shall have at God's right hand for evermore. Pfal. 16. 11. Thou wilk Were me the Path of Life; in thy presence is fulness of joy 3 at thy right Hand there are plea-. fures for evermore. Now will you fell your birth-right for one morfel of Meat? part with your Eternal Inheritance for a little carnal Satisfaction? We have Souls that will no perish; and shall we spend our whole time in feeking after things that perish in the ufing? Temporal things carry no proportion with an immortal Spirit. We shall live for ever, we should look after things that will abide for ever: 1 John 2.17. The World paffeth away, and the Luft thereof; but he that doth the Will of God, abideth for ever. Otherwise what will you do when the Soul shall be turned out of Doors? To what Regions must the poor shiftless harbourless Soul be-take it felf? Surely then this Confolation, though we feel it not always, and it be frequently interrupted, may be well called Eternal Confolation because it affordeth Argument enough to check our worldly and fenfual Inclinations

tions, and to call us off from Time to Eter-

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(2.) To make us stedfast in the Truth, and chearful under Sufferings, for he faith here, The Lord that hath given us everlasting Consolation, comfort your hearts and establish The great use of everlasting Consolation, is to comfort and stablish us in a suffering Condition. The loss of Temporal Comforts is grievous; but it is recompenced with the promise of eternal Joys, revealed in the Gospel. Heb. 10.34. To took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in your selves, that in Heaven ye have a better and an endu-X ring substance; cast not away therefore your Confidence, which bath great recompence of Reward. And all our Pains and Afflictions are sweetned, so far as to keep us from fainting. 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. Our light Affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory; while we look not at the things which are feen, but at the things which are not feen: for the things that are feen, are temporal; but the things that are not seen, are eternal. The end of God's Covenant and Promises, is to give us strong Consolation in the midst of Temptations, Persecutions, and Trials. Worldly Joys appear and vanish in a moment, every blast of Temptation scattereth them: It is eternal Blessedness which is the cause of solid Comfort in all Dangers, Storms, and Tempests: hither we retreat as to our Sanctuary, and find relief. In the World all is unstable and uncertain; but the Covenant provideth for

us eternal Joy and Blifs.

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(3.) The third Effect, which it is to produce in us, is an increase of Holiness, to stablish us in every good Word, that is not only in found Doctrine, but in every good Work, in Holiness of Life, our Endeavours should answer our Motives and Ends; Abound in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as your Labour is not in vain in the Lord, I Cor. 15.58. Diligence should not be grievous to us, when there is everlasting Consolation at the back of it; furely this should put life into all our Endeavours. Should we trifle away that time which we are to improve for Eternity? John 6. 27. Labour not for the Meat that perifles, but for that which is to endure to everlasting Life. Faith in Christ joined with solid Godliness, will lead you to eternal Life. There should be in the Saints an eternal Principle, which is the Grace of the Holy Spirit; and an eternal End, which is the pleafing, glorifying, and enjoying of God; and an eternal Rule, which is the Will of God: and they will have eternal Consolation and Reward.

Use of Extortation.

1. Look upon the New Covenant as it is in it felf, as containing the only folid Grounds of rejoicing; the Bleffings of it are real. certain, stable, and sutable to the great necessities of Mankind. The Blessings are Pardon and Life, they are real, no Fancies or Chimera's. The Gospel is not a Dream, or well devised Fable; but the greatest reality in the World, it speaketh much for it self. commending it felf to the Conscience by rational Evidence; 2 Cor. 4. 2. By manifestation of the Truth, commending our felves to every Man's Conscience in the fight of God: But more by the Authority of the Son of God, who came from Heaven to thew us the way thither. And if it had not been for he would have told us, John 14.2. For he used great plainness of Speech and Fidelity; and is more fully ratified by the Spirit; John 16. 8,9,10,11. He will reprove the World of Sin, of Righteonfiels, and of Judgment. They are stable and unchangeable, as appeareth by the Covenant Form, in which the Conveyance is fo strong and firm, as will make a Plea in Law. 2 Sam. 23. 5. He bath made an Everlasting Covenant with me, ordered in all things, and furt in which is all my hope and defire. And fuitable to many necessities. Here is a Cure for our great Sore by Pardon, and fatisfaction to our Desires by a fit Happiness. 2. Let

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2. Let it be so to you, do you fulfil the Duties required, if there be any room for doubting, it must be of your Qualification 5 x 1 John 3. 19. Hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and Shall affire our hearts before him. We miss much of this everlasting Confolations because we are upon such loose terms with God; never hope to have peace upon cheaper terms, than clear and undoubted Holiness. You are not to model God's Covenant, and new make it, and bring it down to your humour and liking: No, the Covenant is unalterable and eternal: So the Duties as well as the Priviledges. You must take it as you find it, and chuse the things that please God. Ifa. 56. 4. There is your claim, follow that close, - benceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteonfress, which the Lord, the Righteons Judg, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing.

3. Carry it so as those to whom God hath given grounds of everlasting Consolation. We are up when we have the World with us, but dead in the Nest when our temporal Dependencies are broken. The Covenant is the same still, and there should be your Hope and your Joy; 2 Cor. 1.20. All the Promises of God in him, are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the Glory of God by us. 2 Sam. 23. 5. Although my House be not so with God, yet he hath made

with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my Salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. Heaven is where it was, the World cannot make void your Interest in it: Therefore you should rejoice in the Lord always. Phil. 4. 4. Rejoice in the Lord always; and again, I say, rejoice.

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SERMON XVI

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-And good hope through Grace.

WE now come to the third ground of Audience and Acceptance; he hath given us good hope through Grace, This sheweth how we entertain the everlasting Consolation offered in the Gospel, with good Hope, and this wrought in us by God. Here is,

1. The Gift, good Hope.

2. The moving Cause, through Grace.

Doct. That it is a great advantage, when we pray for Consolation and Confirmation in Holiness, to consider that God hath already given us the Hope of Eternal Life.

Here I shall,

R.

1. Open the Gift.

2. Shew what incouragement this is in Prayer.

In the opening the Gift, let me inquire.

I. What

1. What is this good Hope mentioned and what are the Properties of it?

2. That this is the free Gift of God?

1. What is this good Hope? Hope is some times put for the Object, or Thing hoped for. As Prov. 13. 12. Hope deferred, maketh the Heart sad. That is, the delay of the good expected is very tedious, and trouble some to us. So in Christian Hope, Col. 1.5. For the Hope which is laid up for you in Heaven. Where Hope is put for the Object of it, the blessed and glorious Estate, which is reserved for us hereafter. The great objects of Hope, which yet do not exclude intervening Blesses.

fines, are thefe:

(r.) The coming of Christ to our Comfort Tit. 2. 13. Looking for the bleffed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. 1. 13. Gird up the loins of your Minds, and be fober, and hope to the end; for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Hope is there described by its fingular Object, the coming of Christ, called there the Revelation of Christ. Christ is now under a Vail. his Bodily Presence being removed, and his Spiritual Glory seen, but darkly, as in a Glass; but then he shall appear in Person and in his Glery. When Christ withdrew out of fight, our Comfort feemed to be gone with him; but he will come again; he is

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not gone in anger, but about Bufiness, to set all things at rights against the day of solemn Espousals; and then he cometh to possess what he bath purchased, and to carry the Church into the everlasting place of her Abode: This is the great Hope of Christans, and a blessed and good Hope it is indeed.

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(2.) The Refurrection of the Dead. Acts 1. 36. My flest shall reft in Hope. Acts 24. 15. x I have hope towards God, that there shall be a Resurrection both of the Just and Unjust. Acts 16.6, 7, 8. Now I stand judged for the hope of the Promise made unto the Fathers, unto which Promise our twelve Tribes instantly ferving God day and night, hope to come. Why > should it be thought an incredible thing with you that God should raise the Dead? Death seemeth to make void all the Promises at once. but there is an estate after Death, the Dead shall rife; and to Men bred up in the Bosom of the Church, this should not seem incredible: It is not incredible in it felf, confider- x ing the Justice and Power of God. But why to you, Since all Religion tendeth to it? But it is a matter of undoubted certainty all Believers do look for, long for, and prepare for this Bleffedness, otherwise why should they trouble themselves about Religion, which * abridgeth us of present Delights, and expofeth us to great Difficulties and Sufferings: + But there is another Life after this, where all

is happy and joyful; and therefore we force

God instantly day and night.

(3.) The Vision of God, I John 3. 2. that at length we shall be admitted into his bletled Presence, and see him as he is, and be made take him both for Holiness and Happiness.

(4.) Our heavenly Inheritance I Pet. 1. 4. An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us. Called Eternal Life, Tit.1.2. In hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lie, promised us. The Glory of God, Rom. 5. 2. We rejoyce in hope of the Glory of God. Well then, all this is a good Hope, if there be the things hoped for: for the object of our Hope x is the chiefest Good, the eternal Vision and Fruition of God; this is that we must aim at as our Happinels. Plal. 17. 15. As for me, I shall behold thy Face in Righteonfieß, 1 Shall be satisfied when I awake with thy Likenes we must seek after it, and make it our constant Work. Heb. 11.6. God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; this is that we must take hold of, as having a right and title to it. Heb. 6. 18. Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before us. We challenge it by the Law of Grace, as we fulfil the Conditions. Our Hold is more strong, Right more evident; as we get greater meafures of the First-fruits, we gain more security and confidence in the spiritual Conflict

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Ver. 19. Which Hope we have as an Anchor of the Soul sure and stedfust. By good Works we enter upon the possession of it, in part, as we get the First-fruits of the Spirit. Rom. 8. 23. We our selves also, which have the Firstfruits of the Spirit, even we our selves groan within our felves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the redemption of our Body. 2 Cor. 5.5. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is Gac, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. In whole, when we come to Heaven, for then we enter into our Master's Joy, Matth. 25. 21. when we die, our Souls enter into that bleffed place, where the Spirits of just Men are made perfect; not only preserved in manu Dei, but admitted in x conspectum Dei. 1 Pet. 1. 9. Receiving the end of your Faith, the salvation of your Souls? But after the Refurrection and general Judgment, John 14. 3. I will come again, and receive you to my felf; that where I am, there je x may be also. Then in Body and Soul, we enter into our everlasting Mansions.

2. Sometimes Hope is put for the reasons and causes of Hoping; and so he that giveth me solid reasons of Hoping, giveth me good. Hope. In this sense it is taken, Heb. 7. 19. The Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better Hope did: whereby we draw night to God. By the better Hope, is meant the sure and comfortable Promises of the Gospel,

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depend.

depending meerly on the Grace of God. which gives Hope to lost Sinners, of recovering Commerce and Communion with God: That is, folid grounds upon which they may expect the pardon of their Sins, and Eternal Life. In this sense good Hope is Hope well warranted, the folid Reasons are contained in the Word of God. Rom. 15. 4. What soever things were written afore-time, were written for our Learning, that we through patience and comx fort of the Scriptures might have Hope. The great end of the Scriptures, is, that we might have a sure Hope in God: Quod agit tota Scriptura ut credamus in Deum. The business of the Scripture is to bring us to believe in God, and wait upon him for eternal Salvation: There the rule of Commerce between God and us is stated, whatever, is promised is There may be reason to expect some things from God's merciful Nature, though we have no Promise about them, but the x fure and certain Hope is grounded on the Promise, that is, an express ground of Confidence and Hope, that will never leave us ashamed: it is well grounded Hope, therefore good Hope built on the Promife, and Word of the Eternal God.

3. By the act or grace of Hope it self, this may be called Good; either in it self, or with respect to the Degree.

(1.) In it felf: It is good that a Man should

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both hope, and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord, Lam. 3. 26. Bonum is either Honeflum, Jucundum, or Utile, it is good in all regards: It is our duty to rest assured in God's Promise. It is pleasant to anticipate, and forecast a Blessing to come. Surely, it is delightful to live in the fore-sight of endless Glory: It is prositable to support our Hearts under present Difficulties and Troubles, and the uncertainties of the present Life.

(2.) In respect of the Degree and Meafure of it; that is good Hope, which is most able to do its Office, when it is lively Hope. 1 Pet. 1.3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant Mercy bath begotten us again to a liveby Hope. Such as doth most support and quicken us: The more serious and earnest our reflections are upon Eternal Life, the better is the Hope. Heb. 6. 12. Shew the same disigence to the full assurance of Hope unto the end. > We should still keep up this sure and desirous Expectation. Briefly, Hope the Grace

1. There is an Hope, which is the important mediate effect of Regeneration, and is a conflictutive part of the New Creature. Of that the Apostle speaketh, i Pet. 1. 3. Begotten to a lively Hope. This meetly floweth from our acceptance of the New Covenant, and dependeth upon the conditional offer of Eter-

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nal Life, we take it for our Happinels, refolving to feek it in God's Way; without this a Man cannot be a Christian, till he hope for Eternal Life to be given him upon Christ's

2. There is an Hope, which is the fruit of Experience, and belongeth to the seasonded and tried Christian, who hath approved his own fidelity to God, and hath much trial of God's Fidelity and Faithfulness to him: Of this it is faid, Rom. 5.4. that Experience worketh Hope. It differeth from the former, because it produceth not only a conditional Certainty; but an actual confidence of our own Salvation. The former is necesfary, for we live and act by it; the other is very comfortable, for it facilitateth all our Acts, when we know there is referved for us a Crown of Life, which the Righteous Judg will give in that Day, and do not only believe a Refurrection both of the Just and X Unjust, but our own Resurrection unto Eternal Life.

But now for the Effects, I shall instance in two, which fuit with the Prayer in the Text, Confolation in Troubles, and Confirmation

in Holiness.

I. Support in Troubles, when we are certainly persuaded of an happy issue, we are the better kept from fainting: Phil. 1. 19. I Leit

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u O fe know that this shall turn to my Salvation, &c. He speaketh it of his Troubles, and the Marchinations of his Adversaries; and this Knowledg he calleth in the 20th Verse, bis earnest Expectation and his Hope. The bitterest Cross is sweetned by Hope, this carried him through his Sufferings, not only with Patience, but Comfort. As Merrin a storm, when they see Land, take courage; it is but enduring a lieuted more Tempess, and they shall be safe on Shore. To a hoping Christian, his whole big is a rough Voyage, but a short one.

II. To encourage us in working; it is Hope fets the whole World a-works Y Cor. 9. 10. That he that ploweth, should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope, should be partaker. of his Hope. Certainly it is Hope fets the Christian a work; Acts 26. 7. Umo mbeb Promise our twelve Tribes instantly forwing God day and night, hope to come. Why are God's Children fo hard at work for God? but one of love to him, and hope to enjoy him for ever? Oh! let us continually be ferving God 3 let us live always either for Heaven, as feeking it, or upon Heaven, as foliacing our selves with the Hopes of it, do what ever we do morder to eternal Life, and not be taken up with Trifles, and this will put Life into our Endeavours; it is for a glorious and bleffed Estate, on which we employ all this labour. Kk 3 2. That

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2. That this is the free Gift of God; I

must prove two things.

1. That good Hope is his Gift, he doth not only give us Objective Grace; this is the fire and undeserved Mercy of the Gospel, or a sufficient Warrant to hope for it, which are his gracious Promises: But Subjective Grace, the Hope by which we expect this Blessedness, is freely wrought in us by his Holy Spirit, which is a farther confirmation of his love to us; That he hath not only given us the Blessedness we hope for, but the very Hope it self. The Spirit's Work is necessary.

(1.) By way of Illumination, to open the eyes of our minds, that we may fee what * the hope of his Calling, Ephel. 1. 18. Alas! otherwife our fight cannot pierce so far, nor differn any reality in a happiness that lieth in an unfeen and an unknown World, fo as to venture and forfake all that we fee and love for a God and a Glory that we never faw. Nature, if it be not blind in discerning the Duty of Man, yet it is pur-blind, it cannot foresee the happiness of Man, which lieth a far off from us; 2 Pet. 1.9. But he that lack eth these things is blind, and cannot see afin A short-fighted Man cannot see things at a distance from him, not from any defect in the Object, but through the fault in his Eyes so the natural Man, blinded by Delusions, doth

doth either not believe, or forget the World x to come: though these things be set before him in the Promises of the Gospel, they leave no impression upon his heart. There needeth a very quick fight to be able to look from Earth to Heaven; therefore till we are enlightned by the Spirit, we can have no faving knowledg of those things which pertain to

the Kingdom of God, or eternal Life.

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(2.) By way of Inclination, the Spirit doth not only open the Eyes of our Mind, but he doth also incline our hearts to mind x and feek after these things as our Portion and Happiness. Acts 16. 14. God opened the Heart of Lydia. There is an opening of our Mind, and an opening of our Hearts necessary; for the Wisdom of the Flesh is kneaded into our Natures, and we are prepofferfed and entangled with divers foolish and hurtful Lusts. Though we know these things, we regard x them not, and therefore the Work of the Spirit is necessary to incline us earnestly to look and long, and patiently to wait for Bleffedness to come; Gal. 5. 5. For we through the Spirit wait for the Hope of Righteonfnes by Alas! otherwise we should never regard these things, certainly we would not wait for them with so much patience and felf-denial, and folace our hearts with thefe Hopes in the midst of all our Labours, Adverfities, and Troubles, when all is in Expe-Kk 4 Cation,

ctation, and so little in Possession.

(3.) By way of Excitation, he doth quicken us, and comfort us, by railing our Thoughts, Defires, and Endeavours after the promifed Glory and Blessedness; Rom. 15. 13. Now the God of Hope sill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in Hope through the Power of the Holy Ghost. It is by his lively Impressions, that this Grace is acted in us with any profit; our Hope isacted and increased by his Power, blessing the Promises of the Gospel to this end.

2. That it is his free Gift. That which moveth God to give us this Hope, is his meer Love

and Grace. To

1. The Matter of Hope is God's free undeferved Mercy: The Mercy of God is every where made the great invitation of Hope to the fallen Creature. Pfal. 130. 7. Let Ifrael hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is Mercy and plenteous Redemption. Without this there were no Hope for us, and therefore the Saints make this their Anchor-hold. Pfal. 13.

5. I have trusted in thy Mercy, therefore my Soul shall rejoice in thy Salvation. Let others trust in what they will, Lord, I will trust in thy Mercy. This is that which maketh Hope lift up the Head, Jude 21.—Looking for the

lift up the Head, Jude 21. — Looking for the * Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal Life: There is our best and strongest Plea.

But,

2. For the Grace of Hope, it is the mere Fruit of the Lord's Mercy; fuch are our undefervings and ill-defervings, that nothing else could incline him to give us this Hope. He was not induced by any Merits of ours, which are none; nor hindred by any demerits or fins of ours, which were many and great; only his Grace moved him to bring us under the hopes of the Gospel, that we might fet our felves with longing and 'certain expectation in the way of Holines, to feek after the eternal enjoyment of himfelf: 1 Pet. 1. 3. Of his abundant Mercy he hath begotten us to a lively Hope. There were fo many Provocations on our part, such great privileges to be injoyed, that nothing but abundant Mercy could give us this Hope.

II. What incouragement is this in Prayer, if God hath given us good Hope through Grace.

1. God would not invite and raife an Hope to disappoint it. For surely the Lord will not deceive his Creature, that dependeth upon his Word; and therefore we are allowed to challenge him, Psalm. 119.49. Remember thy Word unto thy Servant, on which thou hast cansed me to hope. The words contain a double Argument; the Promise was of God's making, and the Hope of his operation, it is thy Word, and thou hast caused me to hope, his

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his Grant in the New Covenant, and his Influence by the Spirit; we have a strong Tie upon him, as he giveth us the Promise, which is a ground of Hope; furely we may put his Bonds in suit, Chirographa tua tibi injiciebat, Domine; but when his Spirit hath caused us > to hope, it is not with a purpose to defeat it; and therefore we may expect necessary Blesfings, fuch as are support and establishment in Holiness. Sometimes God promiseth, that we may believe, and then promifeth again because we do believe, and trust in him; Isa. 26. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because be trusteth in thee. Actual Hope and Trust giveth a fresh Claim or new Interest; for God will not fail a trusting Soul, as a generous Man will not fail his Friend if he rely on him. We count this to be the strongest Bond we can lay upon another, to be mindful of us, and faithful to us, I wholy trust upon you. Now much more will God do fo, when he hath fent his Work before him, he will bring this Reward with him, when he hath invited Hope by his Promile, and caused Hope by his Spirit, he will give the Mercy you hope for for he hath prepared you for it by his preventing Grace. I remember the Prophet telleth God, Jer. 20.7. O Lord! thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; words that feem to intrench upon the Honour of God. Some interpret them,

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them, as if they were spoken by the Prophet in a Passion; others soften them by another rendring, Thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded, that is, to undertake the Prophetical Office, to which I was nothing forward of my felf, and have found it more troublesome than I expedied. But why may not the words be spoken as a supposition, If I be deceived, thou bast deceived me? God had told him, that he would make him as a Brazen Wall, and had raised a Faith and Hope in him, that he would bear him out in his Work, and so it signifies no more, but I cannot be deceived. When you have God's Word and a well-grounded Hope, it is not a foolish Imagination or vain Expedation. God will not deceive a poor Creature that trusts in him for necessary things, fuch as Perseverance and Establishment in Holines.

2. He that giveth us Hope, will give us all things necessary to the thing hoped for; therefore when God hath called us to the Hope of Eternal Glory by Jesus Christ, we may with the more considence pray for necessary support and establishment in the way. This Argument seemeth to be urged by the Apostle, I Pet. 5. 10. The God of all Gruce, who called you to his Heavenly Glory by Jesus y Christ, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. God that called us to Eternal Glory, foresaw the Difficulties

Difficulties and Troubles we should meet with by the way, and therefore provideth Grace answerable, which we are to sue out by Prayer. Surely he that called them to the possession of Everlasting Blessedness by the Mediator, did not flatter them into a vain Hope, as it will prove, if he help us not: Therefore he will affift us in these Difficulties; and though he will not exempt us from the Conflict, yet he will not deny frength. When we confent to his Calling, it is a fure ground to our Faith, that he that hath called, will give us all things necessary to our Perseverance; for his Calling, when it is effectual, will not be in vain and to no purpose. 1 Cor. 1. 9. God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Cor. 10. 13. There hath no Temptation taken you, but what is common to Men; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the Temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. The intent of his Calling, is to bring them to the possession of what he hath called them to: If he would at first take us with all our Faults, and put us under the Hopes of the Gospel" when we were Sinners, he will follow the first Grace with continual aids and supports, until he hath perfected his Work: and therefore when a People are fincere, and willing

to run all hazards for Christ, God will not only give them Glory at the end of their Journey, but bear their Expences by the way; and therefore we need not be discouraged, and say, How shall we hold out? God, that hath given such hope as to venture upon the Difficulties, will support you under them, he will add more Grace to that Grace that we have received.

3. They that have received good Hope through Grace, have God's Nature and Promise to rest upon 5. His Nature, as he is a gracious God; and his Promise, as he is a faith-

ful God.

(1.) His Nature, as he is a God merciful and gracious. That former Experience doth fully manifelt, he is sufficiently inclined to do us good, and therefore will not fail us in our Necessities: He hath ever born us good Will, never discovered any backwardness to help us, thought of us before the World was, fent his Son to die for us before we were born, or had a being in the World; called us when . we were unworthy; warned us of our Danger when we did not fear it; offered Happiness to us when we had no thought of it; And lest we should turn our backs upon it, followed us with an earnest and uncessant importunity, till we came to anxious Thoughts * about Christ, and began to make it our Bufines to seek after it; by the secret drawings

of his Spirit, inclined us to chuse him for our A Portion, and to rejoice in the Hopes offered. How many Contradictions and struglings of Heart were we conscious to, e're we were brought to this? Ever fince he hath bin tender of us in the whole conduct of his Provix dence, afflicted us when we needed it, delivered us when we were ready to fink; hath pardoned our Failings, visited us in Ordinances, supported us in Doubts, helped us in Temptations, and is still mindful of us at every turn, as if he would not lofe us; and shall not we hope in him to the last? We may reason as they, Judges 13.23. If the Lord had a mind to destroy us, he would not have received a Sacrifice at our hands. And so if God had no mind to fave us, he would not use fuch Methods of Grace about us.

(2.) His Promife; so that we must trust his faithfulnes, after we come under the Hopes of the Gospel. There are two great Promises to support us, His Presence with us in the midst of our Afflictions, and our being ever present with the Lord in Eternal Glory. This is that we have hope of, all the difficulty is, How far God hath promised his Presence with us. Certainly he hath promised it, Psal. 91. 15. I will be with them in troubles. And again, I will be with them in Fire and Water. And again, certain it is, That God is most with his afflicted People, as the Mother.

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ther keepeth most with the fick Child, or the blood runneth to comfort the wounded part. And again, that he will never leave us to unsupportable Difficulties; Heb. 13. 5: I will never leave you, nor for fake you, a negative Gradation. And befides, there is a general Promife, though the Particulars be abfolutely made certain tous; namely, that all fall work together for good, Rom. 8. 28. That giveth us but a probability of Health, and outward Protection, and Deliverance, of a ready support in every Temptation, because we are uncertain how far they are for our good; but for necessary Grace to our Prefervation, there is express provision in the Covenant, Jer. 32.40. I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, &c.

4. It giveth us incouragement in Prayer, because they that have this Hope are so much exposed to the scorn of the World; because they trust in an Invisible God, and look for all their Recompence in a World to come: They think Christians are a company of credulous Fools, that please themselves with Dreams and Fancies; Plal. 22. 7, 8. They laugh me to scorn, because, they say, he trusted in the Lord. a Tim. 4. 10. We therefore labour and suffer Reproach, because me trust in the living God. Christians thought their Reward sure, and therefore endured all things; but

Atheists and Infidels scoff at them, and at all their Comforts as Fanatical Illusions, and persecute them. Therefore God is in point x of Honour engaged to stand by them, and to justify their Hope and Trust; not always by Temporal Deliverance, but by Spiritual Support and Establishment: That it may be feen to e is a Spirit of God, and Glory refteth upon them, that is, glorified by him, however he be evil spoken of in the World. I Pet. 4. 14. God will do so in condescention to his People. Nothing goeth fo near their Hearts, as a disappointment of their Hope in God: It is a mighty damp to their Spirits, when Goddoth as it were spit in their Faces, and reject their Prayers. Pfal. 25.2. Oh my God! I trust in thee, let me not be ashamed. At fuch times the Lord feemeth to countenance the flanders of their Enemies, and to cover their faces with shame.

Use 1. To persuade you to get this Hope of Eternal Life wrought in your hearts.

1. This is the Characteristic and Note of Difference betwixt God's People and others: By this we are distinguished from Pagans, who are described to be such as have no hope, and without God in the World, Ephes. 2. 12. And I Thess. 4. 13. Sorrow not as them without hope. But Christians are such as have good Hope through Grace, and by this we are distinguished from temporary and slight Believers.

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Believers. Heb. 3. 6. His House we are, if me hold fast the considence and rejoycing of Hope, firm unto the end. So also, Ver. 14. If we bold the beginning of our confidence stedfast x unto the end. Their Hope is flight and fluid, the Temporary loseth his Joy and Comfort, which he conceived in the offers of the Gofeel, and so either casts off the profession of Godlines, or neglecteth the Power and Practice of it: But the true Christian is Serious, Patient, Heavenly, and Holy; because he is alway looking to his End, and fweetneth his Work by his great Hope, keepeth up his Tafte or lively expectation of the Mercy of Christ to everlasting Life. Nay, this differenceth the Children of God, those that are in their Conflict, from those that are in their Triumph, the Sanctified and Glorified; those that are in their Way, and those that are at Home: They that are at Home are enjoying what we expect, and in possession of that Supreme Good, that we yet hope for; they have neither Miseries to fear, nor Bleffings to defire, beyond what they do enjoy; they fee what they love, x and possess what they see. But the time of our Advancement is not yet come, and therefore we can only look and long for it; this is our Work and present Happiness.

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ht s. 2. Now the Covenant of God is contrived to raise Hope in us. The Jachin and Boaz, the two Pillars that support it are Mercy and Truth. Micah 7. 20. Thou wilt perform the Truth to Jacob, and the Mercy to Abraham. Psal. 25. 10. All the Paths of the Lord are Mercy and Truth unto such as keep his Covenant, and his Testimonies. And Psal. 138. 2. I will praise the Name for the loving Kindness and Truth: For thou hast magnified the Word above all the Name: And in many other Scriptures.

 The Mercy and Grace of the Covenant.

(1.) In the frame of it, where excellent Benefits are dispensed upon free Terms, that our Faith and Hope may be in God; the Lord would not leave the sinful Creature under Despair, but hath provided a way how we may be Reconciled and Glorisied. Psal. 130. 4. There is forgiveness with thee, that then mayst be feared. Mercy opens the Door for us; the very offer speaks much Mercy, the terms are Mercy. So much Duty is required as is necessary, and doth arise from the nature of the thing; Violence would be offered to the Reason of a serious Creature, if such things were not required.

(2.) In the dispensations of the Blessings of the Covenant. Now, (Gal. 6.16.) To as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and on the Israel of God. There are many Infirmities and Frailties, but

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God passeth them by when there is Sincerity. Our Faith is weak, and mingled with Doubtings; our Love to God clogged with much inordinate Self-love, our Obedience often interrupted; Too much deadness and coldness in holy Things, yet these do not cast us out of the favour of God, nor make void our Interest in the Covenant, where the Heart for the main is set to serve him, and please him. Mal. 3. 17. I will spare them, as a Man spareth his own Son that serveth him.

(3.) At the very close of all it is Grace. Hope unto the end, for the Grace that is brought unto you at the Revelation of Christ, 1 Pet. 1: 12. Then there will be the fullest and largest Manifestation of God's Love and free Grace: There is Grace brought to us now, by the Revelation of Jesus Christ in the Go-spel; but when his Person shall be revealed, Grace shall be seen in all its Graciousness. We feed is Grace in the pardon of Sins, and that measure of Sanctification, which now we attain unto, that he is pleased to pass by * our Offences, and take us into his Family, and give us right to his Heavenly Kingdom, and some taste of his Love, and remote Service. But when Pardon shall be pronounced by the Judge's Mouth, when he shall take us not only into his Family, but into his Palace, and Father's House, and give us not Right only, but Possession; and we shall be Lla

admitted to the immediate Vision and Fruition of God, and be everlastingly imployed in Heavenly Praising, and delighting in him,

then Grace will be Grace indeed.

2. His Truth and Mercy openeth the Door for us. Truth keepeth it open. Mercy is the Pipe, Truth is the conveyance. Now God bindeth himself by Promise, and hath ever been tender of his Word: We may see for the present, that a Covenant-Interest is no fruitless thing, he hath confirmed this Hope to the World by Miracles; to us within the Church by the Seal and earnest of his Spirit, or the impression of his Image, preparing the Hearts of the Faithful for this bleffed Estate. Ephes. 4.30. Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the Day of Redemption. 2 Cor. 5. 5. Who hath given us the earnest of his Spirit. He hath appointed Ordinances to revive our Hopes: I Cor. M. 26. For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come. By daily experience, we see many of God's Children have gone out of the World chearfully, profelling this Hope; we have the same Father, x of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named, Ephes. 3. 15. are reconciled to him by the same Christ, Col. 1. 20. Hawing made peace through the Blood of the Crofs, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him,

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I say, whether they be things in Earth, or things in Heaven. If he be so good to that part of the Family that is now in Heaven, he will be good to them also that are working out their Salvation with sear and trembling.

3. What an advantage is it to the Spiritual Life, to have good Hope wrought in

us through Grace.

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d afs, I 1. It maketh us diligent and Serious; Christianity implieth a serious application of our Heart and Mind, to do what Christ requireth, that we may obtain what he bath offered; to do it as our first work and chief business. Phil. 2.12. Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling. Heb. 4. I. Let us labour to enter into that rest. That is, imply our utmost care and diligence. Now all the Executive Powers are fortisted and strengthened in their Operation by Hope.

2. To be Patient and Mortified, that we subdue our Lusts, and bear the loss of our results with an humble and quiet Mind. Rom. 12. 12. Patient in Tribulation, rejoycing in Hope. And for Lusts, 1 John 3.3. He that re hath this Hope, purifieth himself even as he is

Pure.

3. To be Heavenly and Holy; the one respects our End, the other our Race. For it is not a few dead lifeless Thoughts now and then, but the continual and delightful fore-fight of Eternal Blis. What is the way

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to Heaven, but Hope? And who more pure and holy, than they that look for such things? 2 Pet. 3. 14. Wherefore, Beloved, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent that ye be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Use 2. Well then, get this Hope. But what must we do? You will say, It is God's Gift:

Yet you are bound to use the means.

1. Remove the Impediments. 1 Pet. 1.
13. Be fober, and hope to the end. Draw off the Affections from Carnal Vanities, and the delights of the Senses, and consider what God offereth to you in the Gospel; there can be no certain and desirous expectation of better things, while the Mind and Heart is so occupied and thronged with Vanity, and

* deadned by Carnal Satisfaction.

2. Wait on all the opportunities of Profiting, and use the known means of Grace more conscionably. Certain it is, that the grace of Hope is of God, not acquired, but infused; but God will bless his own Means. The propounding of the Object, the offerxing of the solid Grounds, maketh way for the infusing of the Grace. Tit. 1. 1, 2. Paul was the Apostle to bring them to the acknowledgment of the Truth, for the hope of Eternal Life. And it is called, the Hope of the Gofpel, Col. 1.23. because it is wrought by the Preaching of the Gospel.

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SERMON XVII.

2 Theff. 2. 17.

—Comfort your Hearts, and stablish you in every good Word and Work.

WE come now, Thirdly, to the Prayer it felf. He asketh two Benefits.

I. Comfort.

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2. Establishment.

First, Comfort. [Comfort your Hearts.] But why doth the Apostle pray for that, which they had already? He had told them in the former Verse, That God had given them everlasting Consolation, and now he prayeth that God would comfort them. The Answer given by some is, That he prayeth that God would give them an increase of Comfort: By others, That God would give them the continuance of it. Rather by everlasting Consolation, is meant, the solid matter of Comfort; by his Prayer, now the effectual Application of it: For though sufficient

ficient matter of Comfort be provided for us, yet God must powerfully apply it. The Gospel is a soveraign Plaister, yet God's Hand must make it stick. Observe here

Doct. 1. That all true and solid, and heart-Comfort, is of God. He is called the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort, 2 Cor. 1.3. And again, The God of Patience and Consolation, Rom. 15.5. His Spirit taketh an Office upon him to accomplish this Effect in us, therefore called the Comforter.

- 1. I shall enquire what Comfort is.
- 2. Shew why it is of God.
- 3. What Advantage we have thereby.

I. What Comfort is, Three things are to be Explained.

(i.) Comfort.

(2.) Comforting.

(3.) In what sence it is of God.

II. What Comfort is. We call Two things by that Name.

1. Our natural Refreshment.

2. Our support in Troubles.

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1. Our natural Refreshment, or the benefit that we have by the Creatures, for the hipport of Nature. We cannot enjoy our Temporal Mercies with any delight and pleafure, without God's leave and Bleffing: As to eat and drink with Comfort, that the Soul may enjoy good by its Labour. In one place it is faid, it is by the Hand of God, Ecclef. 2. 24. In another place it is faid, to be the Gift of God, Eccles. 3.13. It is by his Power and his Grace, that the Comfort of the Creature is not in Man's Hands, but God's: Nor can the Creature yield to us any Comfort without his Gift, or Grant. And because of our forfeiture by Sin; we have neither these Mercies from our felves, nor the use, nor the natural benefit from the bare Creature, which is Health, Strength, and Chearfulness. All x Goodness resideth chiefly in God, and it is to be found in the Creatures only by Participation, and that at his Pleasure. Acts 14. 17. He gave us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seafons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladneß. That is, the comfortable use of Food. We must still look to the Giver. But the Apostle here doth not speak of the Comfort of the Creatures, but the Comfort of the Scriptures; not the supply of the Body, but the support of the Soul.

2. Comfort is taken for Support in Troubles. The Thessalonians were now under

great Persecutions. Comfort is a strengthening of the Mind, when it is in danger to be weakened by Fears, and Sorrows, or the strength and stay of the Heart in Trou-Pfal. 119. 50. This is my Comfort in my Afflictions, thy Word bath quickned me. And 2 Cor. 1. 4. Who comforteth us in all our Tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any Trouble, by the Comfort wherewith we are comforted of God. As Cordials are for a Fainting-time, fo are Comforts for a time of Afflictions. Indeed Spiritual Comfort is never out of Season; because we are now in the House of our Pilgrimage, and our chief Good is at a distance from us: And because of the labours and difficulties of the Spiritual Life: Therefore it is said, Acts 9. 31. When the Churches had rest, they walked in the fear of God, and the Comforts of the Holy Ghost. But the great need of Comfort is in our Afflictions, therefore here I shall shew Three things:

1. That God can give his People Comfort in the greatest Tribulation: His Favour is enough to support them against the Frowns of all the World. Isa. 51.12. I, even I am he that comforteth thee. Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of Man that shall die, and the Son of Man that shall be made as the Grass? As long as we have the Almighty and Immortal God to stand by us, and the Promise

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of Eternal Life, it will counterballance all our Trouble. Rom. 5. 2, 3. We rejoyce in hope of the Glory of God. And not only fo. but we glory in Tribulations. Also 2 Cor.4.17. This light Affliction which is but for a moment. worketh for us a far more exceeding and cternal weight of Glory. There is everlasting joy against a heaviness for a Season; and everlasting ease and rest against a little present pain; there is enough to out-weigh all that we can fuffer for, and from God. So the pardon of Sin, Ifa. 40. 1, 2. Comfort ye, comfort ye my People, Saith my God. Why? Because her + Iniquity is pardoned. Matth. 9. 2. Be of good cheer, thy Sin is forgiven thee. Here is found Comfort, the Sting of all our Troubles is taken away. Well then: This the People of God have to support them in all their Tribulation. They can set God against the Creature, Heaven against Earth, Pardon of Sins against all the bitterness they meet with in the World.

2. That there is a special allowance of Comfort for God's Children in their Assiscations. The Lord is more tender of his People then, when they want Comfort, than at another time; they have a more plentiful measure of the supporting Operations of his Spirit then: As I Pet. 4. 14. If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of Glory, and of God resteth upon you.

As the Mother keepeth most with the fick Child, fo God looketh to the Afflicted. This is the difference between God and the World: The World ever runneth most after those that are Prosperous, and flourish, and rejoyce, as Rivers into the Sea, where there is Water enough; but forfaketh those that are in Poverty, Difgrace, and Want: But × God is most mindful of his Afflicted People, visiteth them most, vouchsafeth most of his comfortable Presence to those, that holily and meekly bear the Afflictions he layeth upon them. He comforteth us in all our Tribulations, 2 Cor. 1. 4. The Soul is then more capable of Spiritual Comforts, because their Tafte is more purged and refined from the dregs of Sense; and Grace is more lively and exercised now; the more Grace, the more Comfort. And Prayers are more frequent: And Prayers are feldom in vain.

3. That our Comforts carry proportion with our Sorrows. 2 Cor. 1. 5. As our Affictions abound, so do our Consolations. This cometh from the Wisdom of God, that the Evil may not be greater than our Support, and from the Faithfulness of God, who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, 1 Cor. 10. 13. And therefore if he bring on heavy Troubles, he puts a suitable measure of Comfort, and chearfulness into our Hearts. This is Comfort.

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2. What it is to have our Hearts Comforted. It sheweth that the Heart is the proper feat of Spiritual Comfort. Pfal. 4. 7. Thou haft put gladness into my Heart. God's Comfort is like a foaking Showre, that goes to the Root, and refresheth the Plants of the Earth, more than a Morning dew, that wets only the Surface. Other Comforts tickle the Senses, and refresh the outward Man, but this penetrateth to the very Heart. x Christ prayeth, John 17. 13. That they may have my Joy fulfilled in themselves. Christ's Comforts are not reported to the Ear only, but felt in the Heart: The joy of the World maketh a great noise, but in the midst of it the Heart is forrowful: But God feasts his Children with hidden Manna; they have x Meat and Drink, which the World knoweth not of. In their outward Man, they are exposed to great Difficulties, but their Hearts are filled with joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. The joy of the Carnal in outward things is foraign; and as much as their Senses are pleased, their Hearts are full of tormenting Fears, and fecret Disgusts. They may put a good face upon it, but dig the most jovial of them to the bottom, they have their inward stings, and fecret horrours of Conscience. But in comforting his Children, God chiefly deals with the Heart. Rom. 5.5. The Love of God is fled abroad in our Hearts, by

X the Holy Ghoft given unto us. And 2 Cor. t. 22. He hath given us the earnest of the Spirit in our Hearts. In establishing this Comfort, God doth immediately work upon the Soul's he useth Means indeed: As the Word, Rom. 15.4. That you through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures, might have Hope. There we have the grounds of Comfort fet forth, Christ's Redemption, the Promises of the Gospel, both of Pardon and Life; and the Ordinances, as the Sacraments; as the Eunuch after his Baptism, Acts 8. 39. He went away rejoycing. So in the Lord's Supper, we come to eat of Christ's Peace-offerings, that we may rejoyce in God. Pfal. 22. 26. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him : your Heart shall live for ever. But his Spirit worketh immediately upon the Soul. Either (1.) By opening the Understanding to see the grounds and reasons of Comfort. Rom. 15. 13. Now the God of Peace fill you with all Joy and Peace in believing, that you may abound in Hope. through the Power of the Holy Ghoft. Or (2.) By raising the Heart to the lively act of Joy. Acts 13. 52. The Disciples were filled with Joy, and with the Holy Ghost. Certainly, God comforteth the Heart both ways, by feeing the Grounds; as he worketh Faith. Man is a reasonable Creature, and it is not imareginable that the Holy Ghost should comfort

us we know not why; he revealeth indeed Supernatural grounds of Comfort, but if they be not evident to Reason, they are evident to Faith: But then the very Joy is executed by the efficacy of his Impression. But of that more anon.

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3. In what sence Comfort may be said to be of God. I answer, Three ways.

1. When it is allowed by him.

2. When the Matter is provided by him.

3. When it is wrought by him.

1. When it is allowed by him, and warranted by him. Every Man affects Comfort and Oblectation of Mind; for otherwise they x could never be pleafed in that condition they are in, nor fatisfie themselves. It would much undeceive the Carnal World, and make them see the folly of their unreasonable joy and quiet, if they would put Conscience to the question, Is our Joy from God, or no? that is, Doth God allow it me? Certainly, God doth allow us to rejoyce in our outward Portion. Eccles. 5. 18. It is good and comely for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his Labours that he taketh under the Sun, all the days of his Life, which God giveth him; for it is his Portion. But so that his Fayour may be the

matter of our chief Joy; for otherwise it is exceeding Folly, and groß Carnality, to rejoyce in the Creature apart from God. And in the midst of the greatest Soul-dangers, you must first enquire, Are all things right between God and me? It is a mighty contempt of God, yea, brutish Atheism, to sit down contented with any thing on this fide God, Luke 12. 19. and to fay, Soul, take thine ease, thou hast Goods laid up for many years. To fing Lullabies to our Souls, when God is angry for Sin, this Comfort is not allowed by God: There is no peace, faith my God, to the Wicked, Ifa. 57. 21. It is Spiritual Madness to dance about the brink of Hell.

God in the New Covenant hath propounded excellent grounds of Comfort: John 14.1.

Let not your Hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. The two great general grounds of support against Heart-Trouble, are God's merciful Nature, and Christ's Mediation; more particular in the New Covenant, the promises of Pardon and Life. Of Pardon of Sin, Rom. 5. 1, 2, 3. Therefore being justified by Faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. And of Life Eternal, I Thest. 4. 18. And so shall x we ever be with the Lord; wherefore comfort one another with thesse, words. It is good to see what

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what Comforts we live upon, and propound to our felves, and others, more expressly as to Afflictions, God's particular Providence, that nothing falleth out without God's Appointment. I Theff.3.3. That no Man should be moved with these Afflictions, for your selves know that we were appointed thereunto. It is not Chance, or a natural Accident, but that which God hath appointed. If any Shimel rail, the Lord hath bid him curfe: If any evil come to us, is it without God's Fatherly care over his People, who ordereth all things for their Profit? Heb. 12. 10. They verily for a few days chaftened us after their own pleafore & but He for our profit, that we might be par- x takens of his Holiness. And his unchangeable Love, which doth not vary, and alter with x our Condition : Heb. 12. 6. Whom the Lord , loveth be chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth. He is our God still, though be seemeth to deal hardly with us. We learn of Christ on the very Cross to cry, Myx God, Matth. 27.46. and if we cannot find enough in him, when the Creatures and our natural Comforts fail, it is meet we should's lose them. Heb. 3. 18. Though the Fig-tree should not blassom, &c. yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. This is the fum of God's Comforts; and when these things are suggested to us, God comforteth our Hearts.

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438 3. When by these means God worketh Comfort in us. Joy is often called the Comx fort of the Spirit, and Joy in the Holy Choft. Rom 14. 17. Now all the Spirit's Works are fingular, and do much exceed the natural Work of Man's Heart: The groans which x he stirreth up in Prayer are unutterable, Rom, x 8. 26. His Joys unspeakable and glorious, i Pet. 1.8. The Heathens counted that Fire more fit and pure for their Altars, which was inkindled by a Sun-beam, rather than a Coal taken from a common Hearth. So this Comfort which is raised in us by the Holy Ghost, is more Rich and Glorious, and Affective. than that which is the fruit of our bare Reafon, or the meer working of our Human Spirit, even in the common grounds of Christian Comfort. Or as Elementary Fire differeth from Culinary and Kitchin Fire, and is much more pure: So doth this Joy, which is immediately wrought in us by the Spirit, from all Joy that we can work by our felves. out of the Scriptural Grounds of Comfort. Carnal Men have their Joy at the fecond or third Hand, as God bleffeth the order and influence of Inferiour Caufes, it comes to them from Creature to Creature, so as they discern

Comforting Spirit.

not the Work of God in it; yea, the Joy of common Christians in the proper grounds of Comfort is not so strong, as that which is raifed in us by the immediat impression of the II. Why

II. Why this is of God.

1. Because God challengeth this as his own Right, to comfort the Heart of Man: and therefore whatever the Means of the comfort be, God will be owned as the Spring * and Fountain of it. He keepeth this as his great Bridle upon the World, to govern the Hearts of Men. Job 34. 29. When he giveth Quietness, who then can make Trouble? And when he hideth his Face, who then can behold bim? Whether it be done against a Nation, or against a Man only. Our Peace and Trouble is in God's Hands, and at his disposing. It is true, he exerciseth his Soveraignty according to Law, and in his Internal Government according to the Law of Grace, penally withdrawing his Comforting Spirit, and leaving us to our Doubts, and Troubles, and Fears; by the rewarding our Obedience and Faithfulness with the manifest Tokens of his Love, as the Matter shall require. It is enough for the Point in hand, that God alone doth powerfully dispence Peace, or Trouble. And when he will give Comfort; none can make his Gift void; for it is at his Command: x and in both, a Nation is all one with a particular Person, as to any ability to resist God.

2. Though grounds of Comfort be never fo clear, yet if God concur not, we find not M m 2 the

3. When by these means God worketh Comfort in us. Joy is often called the Com-Rom 14. 17. Now all the Spirit's Works are fingular, and do much exceed the namral Work of Man's Heart: The groans which he stirreth up in Prayer are unutterable, Rom. x 8. 26. His Joys unspeakable and glorious, i Pet 1.8. The Heathers counted that Fire more fit and pure for their Altars, which was inkindled by a Sun-beam, rather than a Coal taken from a common Hearth. So this Comfort which is raised in us by the Holy Ghost, is more Rich and Glorious, and Affective. than that which is the fruit of our bare Reafon, or the meer working of our Human Spirit, even in the common grounds of Christian Comfort. Or as Elementary Fire differeth from Culinary and Kitchin Fire, and is much more pure: So doth this Joy, which is immediately wrought in us by the Spirit, from all Joy that we can work by our felves, out of the Scriptural Grounds of Comfort. Carnal Men have their lov at the fecond or third Hand, as God bleffeth the order and influence of Inferiour Caufes, it comes to them from Creature to Creature, fo as they difcern not the Work of God in it; yea, the Joy of common Christians in the proper grounds of Comfort is not so strong, as that which is raifed in us by the immediat impression of the Comforting Spirit. II. Why

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I. Because God challengeth this as his own Right, to comfort the Heart of Man: and therefore whatever the Means of the comfort be, God will be owned as the Spring and Fountain of it. He keepeth this as his great Bridle upon the World, to govern the Hearts of Men. Job 34. 29. When he giveth Quietnes, who then can make Trouble? And when he kideth his Face, who then can behold bim? Whether it be done against a Nation, or against a Man only. Our Peace and Trouble is in God's Hands, and at his disposing. It is true, he exerciseth his Soveraignty according to Law, and in his Internal Government according to the Law of Grace, penally withdrawing his Comforting Spirit, and leaving us to our Doubts, and Troubles, and Fears; by the rewarding our Obedience and Faithfulness with the manifest Tokens of his Love, as the Matter shall require. It is enough for the Point in hand, that God alone doth powerfully dispence Peace, or Trouble. And when he will give Comfort; none can make his Gift void; for it is at his Command: x and in both, a Nation is all one with a particular Person, as to any ability to resist God.

2. Though grounds of Comfort be never to clear, yet if God concur not, we find not M m 2 the

the effect; therefore it is his Spirit, that can only comfort the Heart. To have God's Warrant for our comfort is much, but to have his Impression is more; both must concur, or the Soul will not be comforted. It falleth out many ways, sometimes out of Ignorance. When a Well of Comfort was near. poor Hagar saw it not, and was almost famished with thirst, until God opened her Eyes, and the faw a Well of Water, Gen. 21.19. We know not the grounds of our comfort. Sometimes out of Passion: Grief is obstinate, and will admit no Remedy; as Rachel would not be comforted, Jer. 31. 15. They are so peevishly addicted to their Worldly Comforts, that if they be croffed in them, they will not admit of God's Comforts, though they are evident, clear, and pertinent. Sometimes out of Forgetfulness, Heb. 12. 5. Te have forgotten the Exhortation, which speaketh unto you as unto Children. And Oblivion is an Ignorance y for the present. Had they remembred, they would not have fainted, and waxed weary. It is a great Work of the Spirit to bring to Remembrance, sometimes questioning their interest in Comfort; besides, that there are general Comforts, when Interest is not clear. Now the Spirit, that sheweth us the things given us of God, doth also reveal and evidence our Right to them. What is wrought in our Hearts, that is to fay, by quickning

us to exercife Grace, he evidenceth the truth of Grace; and in our Afflictions by Patience maketh out our Comfort. Rom. 5. 3, 4, 5. We glory in Tribulations, knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience; and Patience Experience; and Experience Hope: And Hope maketh not ashamed, because the Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. From the whole, there can be no true solid Comfort, but what God bestoweth; his Favour, and our Interest in his Favour is manifested to us by his Spirit.

III. What advantages we have by this,

that all folid Comfort is of God.

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I. It affureth us of God's readiness to comfort poor afflicted Creatures, that hum- x bly submit to him. He that is the God of all Comfort, is also the Father of Mercies, his Mercy and Compassion inclineth him to comfort us. God hath his Name from this effect; Nomina sunt à notioribus, God that comforteth those that are cast down, 2 Cor. 7.6. He is very tender of all Afflicted Creatures, much more of his People.

2. God's Comforts come with more Authority, and silence all our Doubts and Fears. Psal. 94.19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my Soul: We have many intricate perplexing thoughts, out of which we cannot disentangle our selves; × no comforts come with such Authority and

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Power

Power, as God's Comforts. In the Comfort we have, it is good to confider whence it cometh: Is it God's Comfort, or a Fancy of our own? If it be made up by our own Fancy, it will be like a Spider's Web, that is weaved out of its own Bowels, but is gone and swept away with the least turn of a Befom: but God's Comforts are more durable. they flow from the true Fountain of Comfort, upon whose Frowns, or Smiles, our happiness and misery dependeth. There is little warmth in a Fire of our own kindling. God's Comforts are built on his Covenant. and have a commanding force and over-powering efficacy on the Soul. God in his Word speaketh by Soveraign Authority, in our Hearts he worketh by powerful Efficacy. The Authority of his Word we own, when we speak to others, or to our selves, when we know trouble, but in supposition, or imagination: The Efficacy of his Grace we feel, when Trouble comes actually upon us; many that strengthen others, when it cometh upon them faint themselves. Job 4. 4, 5. Thy Words have upholden him that is falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble Knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest: it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled. Which sheweth, that not only the matter of Comfort, but the effectual Bleffing cometh from God, or Comforting of Souls is his Work.

3. That

2. That God's Comforts are full and strong: For he worketh like himself, and therefore can and will support his People in the greatest Difficulties. It is sometimes represented as full, Acts 13. 52. The Disciples were filled with Joy, and with the Holy Ghoft. And, I am filled with Comfort, and am exceeding joyful in all our Tribulations, 2 Cor. 7. 4. καρά. And our Lord lefus, when he took care for our Comfort, took care for our full Comfort : John 15. 11. These things have I spoken, that my foy may remain in you, and your joy might be full. Thus we fee the joy of Believers is a full Joy, that no other Joy needeth to be added to it; it is a full Joy to bear us out under all Discouragements. For what is wanting to them, who have God for their Portion, and the promised Glory for their Inheritance, and God's Providence engaged for their Protection, Safety, and Comfort, while they are here by the way. And it is Strong as well as Full, Heb. 6. 18. That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lye, we might have strong Consolation. Other Comforts are weak and of little force, they are not Affliction-proof, much less are they Death-proof, and Judgment-proof, they cannot stand before a few serious, sober thoughts of the World to come. The Comforts of the World cannot stay and revive the Heart; M m 4 for

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for every blast of a Temptation scattereth them. I had a section of a decision of the provider

Use 1. To reprove Christians for their overmuch dejection and fainting in Troubles. Why are we to much cast down? Is there y no Balm in Gilead, nor Comfort in God? Why hath God taken the Name upon him, of being the God of all Comfort, and put this Office upon his Spirit to be the Comforter? Hath he not made fufficient provision in the New Covenant? Is there any evil, which the promife of Eternal Life cannot countervail? Is God backward to give you Comfort? Why then did be fend Christ. write Scriptures, appoint a Ministry, and Ordinances, feek to prepare you for it, by the feal and earnest of his Spirit, and invite you to earneftly to trust in him, to cast all your care upon him, and fo often forbid your Fear and Sorrow 2

2. If all Comfort be of God, let us go to God for it. But then take these three Di-

rections.

1. See you be qualified for it. Comfort follows Holiness, as Heat doth Fire; the Spirit is first a Sanctisser, and then a Comforter: And according to God's Promise, is more necessarily a Sanctisser than a Comforter. Ephes. 1. 13, 14. In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel

Giftet of your Salvation. On whom alone after that ye believed, we were leaded with that holy Spirit of Promile, which is the Earnest of our Inheritance, while the redemption of the purchased possession, with the praise of his Glory. Comfort is our Happiness, but we are mide Plety before Happy: Hereafter we enter the our Mafter's for, we have a talk of iron the World & Burwho have the Tafte, but the ancified and self-denying Christ- xx ans 2) The Work of Sandification is carried on more certainty, but he Comforting Work is many times obscure and interrupted. Do your Work throughly and faithfulls and you may refer your felves to God for the forty focult of these that ery up bloschen Pluloto

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Ofe 2. Expect not a fingular way of Confort belides the Word: It was Elipha's Charge upon Jab; Chap. 15. It! Are the Confolitions of God small with thee? Is there any scretthing with thee? The Charge is, that he undervalued the common Consolation of God, and looked for some secret way peculiar to himself, of getting Comfort, besides humbling of himself, and turning unto God: No, God hath sufficiently provided for the Comfort of his People; and we must not expect singular manifestations of his Love, and special Signs and Tokens, beyond the com-

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mon allowance given to the whole Paraily. It is a thousand to one but it is some false Confolation, and Dream of Comfort which they affect and cry up, beyond or besides the usual Comforts of his Word.

Cherry Combine is on Suppin Use 3. Do not compare lower Discoveries of God, with that great Revelation he hath made of his Mind in the Word, for the Comfort of his People; for this argueth great unthankfulness, and a secret defire to set up Man's Comfort against those which are unque-Stignedly of the Lord. Sure it is, that whatever good is in Nature, is from God; but it is mingled with fo many weakneffes, that what is of God can scarce be seen in it. I fpeak of those that cry up Heathen Philosophy, to the disparagement of the Word of God: As if it were a better Institution to quiet the Mind, and fortify it against all Troubles, than Christianity: But alas! they neither know the true ground of Mifery, x which is Sin, nor the true ground of Comfort, which is Christ. And that which mere Man offereth, can neither come with fuch Authority and Bleffing, as what cometh immediately from God. This is a Moon-Light that rotteth things before it ripeneth them. In short, Philosophers were never acquainted with Christ, the foundation of Comfort; nor the

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the Spirit, the efficient cause of Comfort; nor the promise of Pardon and Life, which is the matter of Comfort; nor Faith, which is the Light, by which we know things that depend upon Divine Revelation, and so the proper Instrument of Comfort. This I thought good to say, because Comfort and Rest for Souls, is one of the great Benefits x of our Religion. Jer. 6: 16. Stand in the way and see, and ask for the old Paths, where is the good Way, and walk therein; and ye shall find rest for your Souls. Mat. 11.28,29. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy taken, and I will give you Rest.

Use 4. Seek it in the use of Means and Ordinances, which God hath appointed for the raifing of Confort in us, as the Word, Prayer, and the Lord's Supper. In folemn Duties God reneweth the pledges of his Love to us, exciteth Grace, and by Grace Comfort; it must needs be so, because then the grounds of Comfort are anew laid in the view of Conscience: Graces are in their lively Exercise, and God is not wanting to his own Institution. Take all these three together, and the reverend use of the Lord's Supper must needs increase our Comfort. The Ground of Comfort is Reconciliation with & God, by Christ. Rom. 5. 11. We joy in God through

through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the Atonement. And here we raise up our Faith and Love, Cant. 1. 4. The King bath brought me into his Chamber; we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy Love more than Wine; the Opright love thee. God's Ordinances are not empty, there is some participation; I Cor. 10. 16. The Cop of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we brake; is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?

Use 5. Consider the ends why God giveth us Comfort; it is to fortify us against the Enemies of our Salvation, fo far as they are vexing, and troubling, and molefting us in the way to Heaven. The Spirit hath two great Offices, to be a Sanctifier, and Comforter, and both ferve all the needs of Christiansi When we are inticed to Sin, he helps us as a Sanctifyer; when we are discouraged in God's Service, he helps us as a Comforter. And therefore Christians are to consider their condition, and what their present state requireth; for God dispenseth his Grace according to the Affaults made upon them by the Enemies of their Salvation. As for instance; Our Enemies are the Devil, the World and the Flesh, these we renounced in Baptism :

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tism: And in the progress of Christianity. these are those with whom we conslict, and x must overcome. As for instance; The Devil is a tempting Devil, who feeketh to draw away the Saints from God; and by the love > of the Flesh, to weaken our Love and Obedience to our proper and our rightful Lord. Now what are we to do in this case, to beg Comfort and Peace, that we may not be troubled, though we yield unto his Temptat x tions? Alas! this were to turn the Grace of God into Wantonness: No, we are to be for ber and watchful, I Pet. 5.8. to use all the Rules of Sobriety and Vigilancy, that our Worldly Comforts may not be a fnare to us, Sobriety is an Holy Moderation in the use of all earthly things. Vigilancy is an Holy Diligence, and feriousness in the use of Means; and also add to both, the help of the Sanctifying Spirit, that we may keep up our Love to God, and be faithful in our Obedience to him. But the Devil is not only a tempting Devil, but a vexing and disquieting Devil, who accuseth us before God day and night, Rev. 12. 10. raifeth in us many troublesome Fears, × to make our Service uncomfortable, and tire us, and clog us. What is our Duty then? to beg the help of the Comforter, not only & to shew Love to God, but that we may have fome persuation of his Love to us and quench > his

his fiery Darts, that we may go on chearfuly ly in our Work, because the God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly, Rom. 16. 20. So for the World; The World is a tempting World, drawing our Affections from God and Heaven, to present things; and when it fmileth on us, incroaches upon our Hearts more and more. 2 Tim. 4. 10. Demas hath for saken me, having loved this prefent World. Now what is our business then, to beg comfort and affurance of God's Love? No, that would be our Bane, there is work x for the Sanctifier rather than the Comforter. that the worldly Spirit may be subdued in us; there is need of Mortification rather than Affurance, that we may be erucified to the World, Gal. 6. 14. But sometimes the World is a Persecuting World, and reproacheth and troubleth us with all manner of vexations, then there is work for the Comforter, to feal up to our Souls the Love of God, our Interest in Christ: John 16. 33. These things have I spoken to you, that in me ye might have peace, in the World ye shall have tribulation a but be of good chear, I have overcome the World; and to become to our Souls the Earnest of eternal Glory. Comfort is for Tribulation at other times we are glutted with it, but then it is our great support. When all things fail, we feel the great necessity of the Joys of Faith:

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Faith: It is good to time well our Daties; David Gith, Pfal. 56. 3. What time I am a- , fraid, I will trust in thee. So for the Flesh, it inticethus, James 1. 14 Every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Luft, and enticed. Many times it draweth to Actual Sin by indulgence to its defires; yea, disposeth us often to Apostacy and falseness of Heart: for Apoltacy usually begins at fallenels of Heart, when the fleshly Mind x and Interest is not throughly overcome. Well, when we are confeious to this, what shall we do in such a case? Certainly the great and proper Work, is to beg the Spirit, and implore the Spirit as a Sanctifier, and to be more obedient to his fanctifying Motions ; Comfort will come in time. Well, but the Flesh is not only inticing, but troublesom and grievous to the Saints; witness Paul's groans, Rom. 7. 24. Oh wretched Man that I am ; who shall deliver me from the body of this Death? We are quite wearied, and tired out with the importunity of its motions; we would ferve God more purely and perfectly: Then there is work for the Comforter, and confidence in his Operations to help the faithful Soul; Phil. 1. 6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good x Work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. Then it is seasonable to remember

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ber the Governant we are under. Row. 6. 14.
For Sir fall not have dominion over Jon, for you not not not moder the Law, but under Grace.
The serious striving Soul will not be left defititute. Thus must we expect Comfort.

Use 6. Remember that Comfort hath a latinide in it, and is expressed by divers words and in a contact to the co

when the sence of Sin, and sear of God's Wrath, is not altogether removed and taken away, but so mitigated and abated, that

* Hope doth more easily prevail in the Soule x than Fear: And we resolve to wait on God, though we cannot so fully clear up our Interest in him. You have many Gonsticts and Fears, yet some Hope and Expectation towards God: Jonah 2, 4, 5. I am cast out of thy sight, yet wilk I look again to thy Holy Temple. Resolute adherence giveth great support. Job 13, 15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; I will maintain my own ways before him. He dependeth merely on the Covenant.

2. Peace, or some rest from Troubles, and accusations of Conscience, there is some ealm and quiet of Soul; Rom. 5. 1. Being instified by Faith, we have peace with God. Gal. 6. 16. As many as walk according to this Rule, Peace

be on them, and Mercy: Assaulted with none or light Fears, John 16. 33. In me ye. shall bave Peace. I will give you Peace, though

not full Spiritual Suavities.

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3. The third word is Joy, 1 Pet. 1.8. Te rejoice with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. In Peace all things are quiet, they have no anxious Thoughts; but in Joy there is a sensible motion of Pleasure and Delight, they are fealted with the pleasures of Faith, Love, * and Hope. Let us then bless God for any degree of Comfort. ent there is a second to

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SERMON XVIII-

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__And stablish you in every good Word and Work

VE come now to the Apostle's second Request for them, and stability you in every good Word and Work: By every good Word, is meant sound Doctrine; by every good Work, holiness of Life.

Doct. Establishment in Faith and Holiness, is a needful Blessing, and earnessly to be sought of God.

- 1. What this Establishment is.
- 2. How needful.
- 3. Why it is to be fought of God.

I. What this Establishment is? Answ. Confirmation in the Grace that we have received. Now this Confirmation must be distinguished.

1. With respect to the Power wherewith

we are affisted; there is Habitual Confirma-

tion, and Actual Confirmation.

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(1.) The Habitual Confirmation is, when the habits of Grace are more fetled and increased; I Pet. 5. 10. The God of all Grace strengthen, stablish, settle jou. God hath effectually called and converted them, and he beggeth the strengthning of the Grace which they had received. Now thus we are established, when Faith, Love, and Hope, are increased in us; for these are the Principles of, all Spiritual Operations; and when they have gotten good strength in us, a Christian is more established. (1.) Faith is necessary. for we stand by Faith; Rom. 11. 20. Beranse of unbelief they were broken off, but thou standest by Faith: We do not only live by it, but x stand by it and are kept by it ; I Pet. 1.5. Who are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation. He is strong, that is, strong in Faith, as Abraham was, that believeth the Gospel, and can venture his All upon it, and x trust himself in God's hands whatever befalleth him. Luke 22. 32. I have prayed for thee that thy Faith fail not. That was the Grace likely to be affaulted, and would most keep him: had he bin perfuaded that Jesus was the Son of God, would he have denied him with Oaths and Execrations? (2.) Love is strong; Weare told, Cant. 8.6. That Love is as strong as Death's many Waters cannot quench it & If a man mould Nn 2

nould give all the substance of his House, it would utterly be contemned. It will not be bribed, or quenched. Our Backsliding cometh from losing our complacency in, or desire of God. There is an averseness from Sin, and zeal against it, as long as we have a sense of our Obligations to God, and a value and esteem of his Grace in Christ; then we continue in delightful obedience to him, and level and direct our actions to his Glory.

(3.) Hope is necessary to stablish the Soul on the promise of Eternal Life. For this is the sure and stedsast Anchor of the Soul. Heb. 6. 19. Which Hope we have as an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedsast: If Hope be strong and lively, present things do not greatly move us.

(2.) Actual Establishment, when these Habits are fortissed and quickned by the actual Instuence of God. As God doth establish by these habitual Principles, so by the actual motions of his Spirit; for otherwise neither the stability of our Resolutions, nor of Gracious Habits will support us. Not stability of Resolutions; Psal. 73. 2. As for me, my Feet were almost gone, my steps had wellnigh slipt. Not Habits; Rev. 3, 2. Be watchful, and strengthen those things which remain, that are ready to die. It is true, God ordinarily worketh most strongly with strongest Graces, because their Hearts are most prepared; yet

fometimes weak Christians have gone through great Temptations, when strong ones have failed. Rev. 3. 8. Then hast a little strength, and hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my Name. Sometimes the strong Christian stumbleth and falleth, when the weak standeth: God may in an instant consirm a weak Person in some particular Temptation, by his free Assistance, but ordinarily concurreth with the strongest Grace. Thus with respect to the Power, wherewith we are assisted.

2. With respect to the Object, or Matter about which it is conversant; stablished in every good Word and Work; stability in the Doctrine of Faith, and Practice of God-

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(1.) In the Doctrine of Faith. It is a great advantage in the Spiritual Life, to have a found Judgment: Some Men are never well grounded in the Truth, and in the nature and reasons of that Religion which they do profess, and then are always left to a wan- x dering uncertainty, because they resolve not upon Evidence:as Men ordinarily abide not in the place to which they are driven by a Tempest, or the current of the Tides, rather than by aim and choice, though they take shelter there for the present. 1 Thes. 5.21. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. Cettainly Religion in the general must be takenup by Choice, and not by Chance; not because Nn 3

cause we know no other, but because we x know no better: As Jer. 6.16. Stand je in the Ways and fee, and ask for the old Paths, where is the good Way, and walk therein. And the fame is true of particular Opinions and Controversies about Religion, till we have is now sheryua, our own stedfastness, 2 Pet. 3. 17. We stand by the stedfastness of others, when we profess the Truth, meerly because of Company; and when the Chain is broken, we all fall to pieces. Now we ought to be well fettled, left we appear to the World with a various Face, which breedeth Atheism in others, and Shame to our felves. It is poffible in particular things, future Light may disprove present Practice; but then we must be able to give a very fufficient account of Luther, when he was charged with Apostacy, Confitetur se esse Apostatam, sed beatum & Sanctum, qui fidem Diabolo datam non fervavit. While we cry up Constancy, we must not cherish stubborn Prejudice, which shuts the Door upon Truth: However, to avoid the opinion of Lightness, before Religious Persons profess any thing, their warrant need to be very clear, both for the World's sake and their own, that they may not make needless Troubles, and afterwards change their Mind to the scandalizing of others: And their own sake & Juxos awip, James 1.8. A double-minded Man is unstable in all his ways.

And we had need to take care to be right, because every error hath an influence upon the Heart, and Practice: Upon the Heart, as it weakeneth Faith and Love, and Pra-+ &ice. Some Opinions have no malignity in themselves, yet the profession of them may divide the Church, and make us by Contentions, Enemies of the growth and pro-x gress of Christ's Kingdom. Now if we would be established in the Truth, we mustfee what Influence every Truth hath upon the new Nature, either as it worketh towards God by Faith, to keep up our respects to him, or Men by Love, as it furthereth our Duties to them. A Man will not eafily let go Truth, that is wont to turn it into Practice, and to live as he believeth. Once more we need to be established in the present Truth; it is no zeal to fight with Ghosts, and antiquated Errors, but take God's part in our time; but usually the Orthodoxy of the World, is an Age too short, Men please themselves in things received.

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(2.) In every good Work, or in holiness of Life. Here needeth the greatest establishment, that we may hold on our course to Heaven; and the usual Apostacy, and Backsliding that Men are guilty of, is from the practice of Religion. It is ill when the Mind is tainted, but worse when the Heart is alineated from God; and commonly

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it is the perverse inclination to the Will, that tainteth the Mind: Therefore the great Establishment, is to be settled in a course of Godlines. 1 Thess. 3. 13. That he may establish your Hearts unblameable in Holiness before God, even our Father, until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his Saints. Now

this Establishment is very difficult.

First, Because of the contrariety of the Principles that are within us. Gal. 5. 17. For the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, and these are contrary one to the other ; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. The Garison is not free from Danger, that hath an Enemy lodged within. The love of the World and the Flesh, was in the Heart, before the Love of God and Holiness, and these are not wholly rooted out; yea, these are natural to us, whereas Grace is a Plant planted in us, contrary to Nature: And the Ground that bringeth forth Weeds and Thilles of its own accord, but the Flowers and good Herbs, with much Tillage and Cultivation; if it be neglected, the Weeds will foon overgrow the Flowers.

Secondly, Because it is more hard to continue in Conversion, than to convert our selves at first. In our first Conversion we are more passive, it is God that converteth us, and draweth us to himself, and quickens, and plants us into Christ; but in Perseve-

rance,

rance, and fulfilling our Covenanting Duty, we are more active; it is our Work, though x we perform it by God's Grace. An Infant in the Mother's Womb is nourished by the nourishment of the Mother, but afterwards he must suck, and seek his own Nourishment; and the elder he groweth, the more care of his Life is devolved upon himfelf. x Now that which is more our work, is more difficult. It is true, that God that hath begun a good Work, doth perfect it, but not without our care, Phil. 1.6. When we are fitted and prepared unto good Works, God expecteth from us, that we should walk in them. God stablisheth us in the Text, but it is in every good Work. Befides, in Conversion we make Covenant with God, but by Perseverance we keep Covenant withx him. Now it is easier to consent to Conditions, than it is to fulfil them; the Ceremonies at first confent of Marriage are nor fo difficult, as to perform the duties of the Marriage Covenant: It is more easie to build a Castle in a time of Peace, than to keep it in a time of War. Peter more easily consented to come to Christ upon the Water, but when he begun to try it, his Feet were ready to fink, Mat. 14.29,30. When Winds and Waves are against us, alas, how soon do we fail? Therefore a good Spring doth not always foreshew a fruitful Harvest, nor plenty

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of Bloffoms store of Fruit. We are carried on with great Life and Earnestness for a while. in the profession of Religion, we consent to follow Christ; but when we meet with Difficulties not foreseen, or allowed for, we faint

and are discouraged.

Thirdly, With respect to the Subject in which it is feated, which is the Soul with its Faculties. The strength of the Body is known by Experience rather than by De-fcription; but the strength of the Soul must be determined by its right constitution towards Good and Evil. The faculties of the Soul are either the Understanding, wherein lieth the Directive Councel, or the Will, 2 wherein lieth the Imperial Power, or the Affections, wherein lieth the Executive Pow-3 er of the Soul.

1. The Mind, or Understanding, is established, when we have a clear, certain, and full Apprehenfton of the truth of the Gospel, it is called Knowledg; the sure, and found, and certain apprehension of them, is called Faith, or Intellectual Affent, or the x full assurance of Understanding, Col. 2. 2. when there is a due knowledg of what God hath revealed, with a certain persuasion of the truth of it wrought in us by the Holy Now the more clearly, and orderly, and certainly we know these things, the more powerfully do they affect the Heart, and the

the more we are established. He that hath little Knowledg, and little Certainty, is called weak in the Faith. Rom. 14.1. Him that is weak in the Faith receive, but not to doubtful Disputations. And those that have a . clearer Understanding, are called strong. As Rom. 15. 1. We that are strong, ought to bear the Infirmities of the Weak; meaning strong in Knowledg: So also for certainty of Perfuafion, it is faid, Rom. 4. 20. Abraham was strong in Faith, giving glory to God. When in all his Trials, he bore up himself upon the Confidence of God's Word and Promise. Well then, the Mind is confirmed and established, when we have a good stock of Know- > ledg, and do firmly believe what we know x of God and Christ, and eternal Salvation: > But alas, how few Truths do many Christians know, especially in their order, and as to their worth and weight, and certainty, and fo that if we know these things, we know them not as we ought to know them. I Cor. 8. 2. If any Man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know them. If we know them Speculatively, we know them not Practically: If we are able to discourse of these things, we do not live by them: If we know them generally, we do not know them particularly, to direct us in all Cases, wherein they concern us, but are blinded with Temptations: If we

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we know them comprehensively, so as to look about the compass of them, yet not certainly, John 17.8. and have knewn furely, that I came out from thee, so as to venture our Interests upon them. If we know them darkly, and with an half light, we do not know them clearly and with a full light. There is many times conviction in the Ore, which is not refined into a clear, and distinct knowledg, fuch as may awe the Heart; if we know these things habitually, we know them not actually, when we should remember them in their season; and Oblivion is a fort of Ignorance. Hence come the many doubts we are affaulted with, and all the unevenness and uncertainty of our Lives, fo that the Mind needeth to be established in Grace.

2. The Will, which is the Imperial power of the Soul. Now the Wills establishment is known by its firm and through resolution for God, and against Sin. For God: as Ass 11.23. Barnabas, when he had seen the Grace of God, was very glad, and exhorted them all, that with full purpose of Heart they would cleave to the Lord. First choosing, then cleaving, and this with full purpose, when the Will is so fixed in the Knowledg and Faith of the Gospel, that they resolve to abide by their choice: Psal. 27. 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, this will I seek after. When Spiritual Resolution carrieth the force

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and authority of a principle in the Soul, and nothing can break it. I Pet. 4. I. Arm your felves with the same Mind. As constantly as Christ persevered in the work of Mediation, to be you in the work of Obedience, notwithstanding the difficulties of it. This powerful Will, that beareth down Oppositions and Temptations, and the greatest Impediments in the way to Heaven. So that you rather make advantage of Opposition, than are discouraged by it, when sensual, or carnal Good is of little force to you, and you can dispise the most pleasing baits of Sin.

3. The Affections are the executive power, and do excite and stir us up to do what the Mind is convinced of, and the Will x resolved upon, as to the necessary Duties of the Gospel in order to Eternal Happiness. There is a Backwardness within, and many Temptations without; but an holy Delight overcometh the unwilling backwardness within, and overballanceth either Worldly Fear, or Worldly Hope without, that the Soul is carried on powerfully towards God. never work better, than when we work in the strength of some eminent Affection, when the Heart is enlarged. Pfal. 119. 32. I will run the way of thy Commandments, when thou shalt inlarge my Heart. Either Love, or Hope. Love filleth us with delight, overcoming our natural flackness and fluggishness in the Ways of

of God. Pfal. 40. 8. I delight to do thy Will, y O my God, yea, thy Love is within my Heart. I John 5.3. For this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous. Pfal. 112. 1. Bleffed is the Man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his Commandments. Hope beareth us up in contempt of present delights, and terrors of Sense. Heb. 3.6. Whose House are we, if we bold fast the considence, and rejoycing of Hope firm unto the end. So that we serve God with vigour and alacrity. When our Affections are damped, Grace falleth into a confumption; and if you lose your taste, your Practice will languish, your Service of God will not be fo uniform. It is a great part of our establishment to keep up the vigour and fervency of our Affections.

4. With respect to the Uses for which it serveth, as to Duties, Sufferings, Con-

flias.

(1.) Doing the Will of God, or discharging our Doings with Delight, Chearfulness, and Constancy: for all strength is for Work. Ephes. 3.16. That he would grant you according to the rickes of his Glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner Man. That we may do our work with that readiness of Mind, which becomes Faith in Christ, and Love to God. This is often spoken of in Scripture, Phil. 2. 13. For it is God that worketh

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morketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure, To Servin it to every every every good work to do his will, working in you what is well pleasing in his sight. It is of great use to our establishment, that the Soul be kept doing; for as Wells are the sweeter for draining, so are we the more lively for exercise. Frequent omission of good Duties, or seldom exercise of Grace, necessarily produceth a decay: As a Key rusteth that is seldom turned in the Lock, thereby we lose the life and comfort of Religion, and at length cast it off as a needless and unprofitable thing.

(2.) For bearing Afflictions, and passing through all conditions with Honour to God, and safety to our selves. Phil. 4. 13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Col. 1. 11. Strengthened with all Might, according to his glorious Power, with all Patience. The great use of Establishment, is to sortisse us against all the evils and inconveniencies of the present Life; that we may hold on our Course to Heaven in fair Way, or soul, and not be greatly moved by any thing

that befalleth us within time.

(3.) For Conflicts, with Temptations from the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. The World is round about us, and we are accustomed to these enveigling Objects, whose importunity prevaileth at length; the Devil

feek-

feeketh to work upon our Affections and Inclinations, and the Flesh urgeth us to gratifie them; How then is a Christian safe? God x establisheth him. Ephes. 6. 10. Finally, be Grong in the Lord, and in the power of his Might. A Christian here is in a Military state, and we of our selves left unto our felves, are like Reeds shaken with every Wind; we have need of establishment in regard of our own Feebleness, and the force of our Enemies. We must be established against the Devil soliciting; against the World, the filent Argument, by which he foliciteth us, and draweth us from God and Heaven against the Flesh, the rebelling Principle, which is apt to be wrought upon by Satan. Well then, this establishment is that Grace, which enableth us to carry on the Duties of Religion with constancy, frequency, and delight; to bear all the inconveniencies of Religion with Patience and Fortitude; to be more deaf and resolute against all the fuggestions of the Devil, or the machinations of the Flesh, stirred up by the World.

ftrengthning of the Soul, as doth prevent not only our Fall, but our shaking. Before falling away, or our being drawn to Apostacy, there may be a shaking, a doubtfulnes, and wavering of mind with respect to the Truth, and much inconstancy and uneven-

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ness of Life with respect to practice. Now Christians, as they must not draw back to Perdition, so they must not be always fluctuating and unfixed, either in Matters of Opinion, but setled in the Truth; or in matters of Practice, there must be a strength and stability of holy Inclinations, and Refolutions for God and the World to come, still kept up, or else there will be no evenness or uniformity in the course of our Lives; and though we avoid Apoltacy, yet we cannot avoid Scandal; though there be no falling back, there is a stepping out into By-Paths: I Cor. 15. 58. Be stedfast and unmoveable; always a= bounding in the Work of the Lord. And Ephes. 3. 17. That ye being rooted and grounded in Love, &c. And Col. 1. 23. If ye continue in the Faith grounded and setled, and be not moved away from the Hope of the Goffel. If we do not look to the Degree, our weakness and instability groweth upon us : As in matters of Opinion, some have an unsetled Head of a vertiginous Spirit, Ephes. 4. 14. carried about with every wind of Doctrine: They never were well grounded in the Truth, nor took up the ways they are engaged in upon fufficient Evidence; and therefore by their own weakness, and the cunning and diligence of the Seducers, are drawn into Error. Light Chaff is blown up and down by every Wind, when folid Grain hitcheth in, and Oo resteth

resteth in the Floor where it is winnowed. An half light maketh us uncertain in our Course. For Matter of Practice, if we allow our selves in our first Declinings, the Evil will grow upon us, when the Judgment reasoneth more remissly against Sin than it did

reasoneth more remisly against Sin than it did before, and the Will doth oppose it with less resolution, or with greater faintness and indifferency, or when Oppolition doth more discourage us. No, there must be a resolved conquest of Temptations that would pervert you, this will only ferve our turn. Heb.12.3. Consider him that endured such Contradictions, lest ye be weary, and faint in your minds. Weariness is a lesser degree of Desiciency. Many a Man is weary, that is not faint or quite spent: So the practice of Godliness, when the Heart beginning to be alienated and estranged from God, and the Life of Duty doth decay; when our first Love is gone, our first Works will in a great measure cease. Rev. 2. 4, 5. Nevertheles I have something against thee, because thou hast left thy first Love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen,

* and repent, and do thy first Works. Well then, the Degree must be minded, for though a Man may be stedfast in the main, yet he may

be somewhat moved and shaken; But a Christian should not only be stedfast, but unmoveable, otherwise we shall be very uncertain in our Motions.

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(1.) Man at best is but a Creature; the New Creation doth carry a great correspondence with the Old and First Creation: not enough that the Creature be, but he must be sustained in Being; we have our Being in God Still, Acts 17. 28. For in him we live, and > move, and have our Being. As Providence is a continual Creation, so stablishing Grace is the continuance of the New Creation. The fame Grace that fets us in the state of the New Creation, the same stablisheth us. God found no stability in the Angels, therefore it is said he trusteth them not, Job 15. 15. Behold, he putteth no trust in his Saints; yea, the Heavens are not clean in his sight. They stand by the Grace and Favour of God. Take the best Creatures even as Creatures, they are defective and unstable in themselves; for God will have the Creature, as a Creature, to be a dependent thing on the Creator, who only is a Being of himself. Man at his best estate was but an unstable Creature, for Adam gave out at the first affault, and fince we are very unstable, blown down with the blast of every little Temptation. Even in the State of Grace, we are like a Glass without a bottom, broken as foon as out of hand; and therefore God alone is able to make us stand, 00 2 and

and persevere in this Grace that we have received. 2 Cor. 1.21. Now he that stablisheth us with you in Christ, is God. After we are in Christ, our stability is in God alone.

(2.) The Indisposition of our Natures both to every good Word and Work. 1. To every good Word. The Truths of the Gospel are supernatural: Now things that are planted in us contrary to Nature, can hardly subfift and maintain themselves. We have some Seeds of the Law yet left in our Hearts, Rom. 2. 14. But the Gospel dependeth on fure Revelation; therefore are there fo many Herefies against the Gospel, but none against the Law: Therefore as they depend upon a Divine Revelation, they must be setled in our Hearts by a Divine Power, and by a Divine Power preserved there; that as the Doctrine is supernatural, so the Grace may be also by which we do receive it. Faith is the Gift of God, Ephes. 2.8. For by Grace ye are saved through Faith; and that not of your felves, it is the Gift of God; both as to its beginning, so to its preservation and increase. 2. To every good Work. There is not only flowness and backwardness of Heart to the Duties of the Gospel, but somewhat of the old enmity and averseness remaineth still. Our Hearts are not only inconstant and unsetled, but very wayward, fer. 14. 10. Thus Suith the Lord to this People, Thus have they lored

mitted

ved to wander. Pfal, 95. 10. It is a People that do err in their Heart. Moses was no sooner gone aside with God in the Mount, but the Israeliter after their solemn Covenant sel to Idolatry. Before the Law could be written, they brake it. Now we that have a warring Principle within, how can we stand unless God establish us? There is a back-byass, there are the Seeds of Wantonness, Anger, Revenge, Envy, Impatience, Worldliness, Ambition, and Sensuality. God knowerh how little the stelly Mind and Interest is conquered in us seand therefore if he did not establish us, we should soon shew our selves

(3.) In regard of those Oppositions that are made against us after once we be in Christ. It is not enough that we are brought out of the Kingdom of Satan, but after we are rescued out of his Hand and Power, * he purfueth us with continual malice; therefore there must be the same power to stablish us still in Grace, that first brought us into the state of Grace ? Col. 1. 13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and bath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son: compared with I John 4. 4. Te are of God, tittle Children, and have overcome them: because greater . is be that is in you, than be that is in the World. World runneth a quite contrary courfe than those do that fet their faces Heavenward, and therefore maligh them, and purfue them with Reproaches and Troubles. 1 Pet. 4 4, 5. Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the fame excess of Riot, speaking evil of you; who shall give account to bim that is ready to judg the quick and the dead. And most commonly our Supports are invisible, and we have no temporal Interest to lean to. But, 2 Tim. 1. 17. For the which cause I also suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded be is able to keep that which I have com-

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mitted unto him against that day. We bear these

Afflictions by the Power of God.

4ly; We see here the Saints miscarry when God withdraweth his supporting Grace but in part; as Peter, David. Peter was in the state of Grace, and Christ prayed that his Faith might not utterly fail; vet when God did not establish him. you fee what Sinshe was guilty of in that combat : David was a Man after God's own Heart, but how did he fall when God upheld him not? Plal. 51. Hezekiah, 2. Cron. 32.31. Howbeit in the bufiness of the Ambaffadors of the Princes of Babylon, who fent unto him to enquire of the Wonder that was done in the Land. God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart. Thus is God fain for to humble his Children, to teach them Dependence; and to put them in mind that they do not stand by their own firength.

3. Why it is to be fought of God?

(1.) He only is able, Rom. 16.25. Now to bim that is of power to establish you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, &c. Surely God never * made a Creature too hard for himself. He isable to defeat the Power of Enemies, and to preserve his People in the midst of Temptations. So Jude ver. 24. To him that is able to keep you from falling, &c. And, He is able to keep that which I have committed to him, 2 Tim. 1.12. The Saints gather much comfort from this: for it is a relief to their thoughts against the dreadful and powerful opposition of the World; they have no reason to doubt of their Father's Love. That which surprizeth them, is to see all the World against them. It is the dreadfulness of power in the Temptation, and sense of their own weakness, therefore the power of God is a fit relief to them.

(2.) God is not very forward to cast you off, when he hath a just cause to do it. Your constant experience evidenceth this; If he here had done fo. what had become of you long ago? For you have given him abundant occasion, you have wearied * him with your Sins, abused his Mercies; and yet he hath not cast you off: He hath not utterly forsaken you, when you have turned the back upon him. and have been ready to forfake him, but hath kept you from Dangers, and in Dangers; yea, called you to his Grace, confirmed you hitherto, why should you doubt of his Grace for the future? 2 Cor. 1. 10. Who delivered us from fo great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us, 2 Tim. 4. 17, 18. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might bear: and I was delivered out of the Mouth of the Lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil Work, and will pre-Serve me unto his Heavenly Kingdom: To whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(3.) He hath made Promises of Sustentation, and Preservation: Psal. 73. 23. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my righthand. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for God upholdeth him with his Hand. If God hath promised to preserve that Grace which he hath once given, should not we pray for the continuance of it with the more encouragement?

(4.) The experience of the Saints. Pfal. 94. 18. When I faid my foot flippeth, thy Mercy O Lord, held me up. God's Manutenancy is there afferted.

Use. Is to press us at all times, to look up to God for establishment: But especially in two Seafons.

(1.) When we begin to decline, and grow more remiss and indifferent in the practice of Godx liness. If Grace be weak, you must get it strengthened. When you grow bolder in Sin, and more firange to God and Jefus Christ, and have little converse with him in the Spirit; Oh! it is time to be instant and earned with God, that he would recover you: Though you have embezled your Strength. vet you have to do with a Merciful God; go to him for Help. Pfal. 17. 5. Hold up my goings in thy * Path, that my foot-steps Rip not. You have torfeited the more plentiful aids of Grace; but beg him not to forfake you utterly. You must confess the Sin. but God must remedy the Evil. Plak 119, 133. Order my feps in thy Word : and let not any Iniquity bave dominion over me. Lord, I am apt to be led away with worldly Allurements, my Spiritual Taffe is differencered with carnal Vanities : But, let not Iniqui-

(2.) In unsettled Times, when we are full of Fears, and think we shall never hold out in a holy Course; God that keepeth us in times of Peace, will hold us up in times of Trouble, Pfal. 16. 8. I have set the Lord always before me: because be is at my

right hand, I shall not be moved.

ty bave dominion over me.

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